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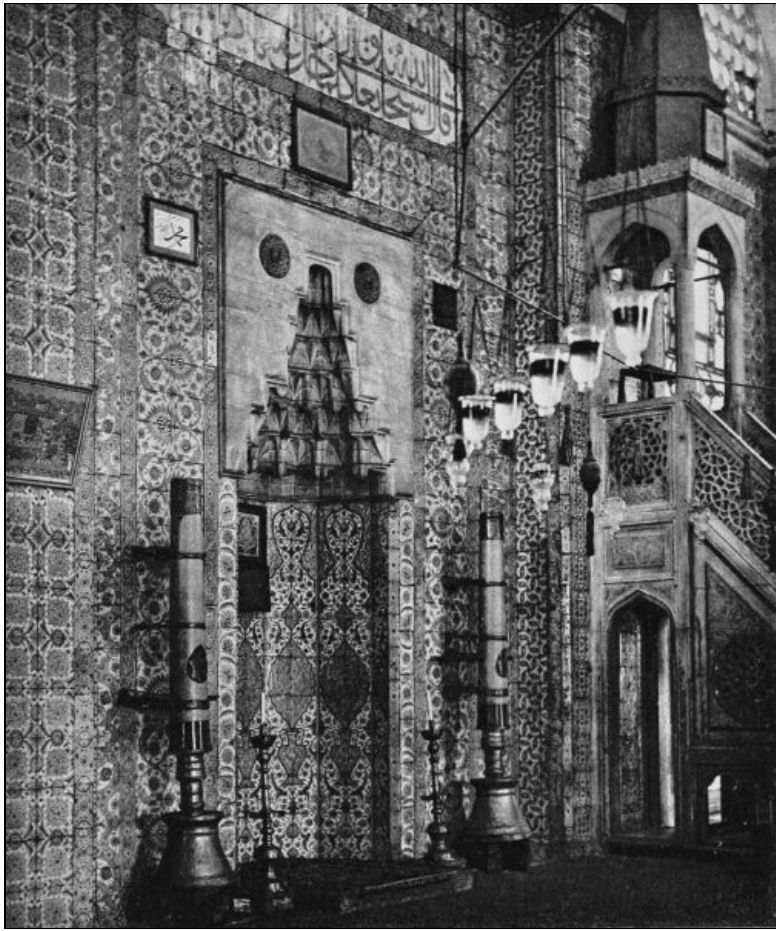
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The Mihrab of the Mosque of Roustem Pasha, Showing Persian Tiles.

CONSTANTINOPLE.

BY

EDMONDO DE AMICIS,

AUTHOR OF "HOLLAND," "SPAIN AND THE SPANIARDS," ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FIFTEENTH ITALIAN EDITION BY

MARIA HORNOR LANSDALE.

ILLUSTRATED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE ARRIVAL.

The arrival at Constantinople made such an overpowering impression upon me as to almost efface what I had seen during the previous ten days' trip from the Straits of Messina to the mouth of the Bosphorus. The Ionian Sea, blue and unruffled as a lake; the distant mountains of Morea, tinged with rose color in the early morning light; the archipelago, gilded with the rays of the setting sun; the ruins of Athens; the Gulf of Salonika, Lemnos, Tenedos, the Dardanelles, and a crowd of persons and events which had caused me infinite amusement during the voyage,—faded into such indistinct and shadowy outlines at the first sight of the Golden Horn that were I now to undertake a description of them it would be an effort rather of imagination than of memory; and so, in order to impart something of life and warmth to the opening pages of my book, I shall omit all preliminaries and begin with the last evening of the voyage at the precise moment when, in the middle of the Sea of Marmora, the captain came up to my friend Yunk and me, and, laying his two hands on our shoulders, said, in his pure Palerman accent, "Gentlemen, to-morrow at daybreak we shall see the first minarets of Stambul."

Ah! you smile, my good reader, you who have plenty of money and are tired of spending it—who, when a year or so ago the fancy seized you to go to Constantinople in twenty-four hours, with your purse well lined and your trunks packed, set forth as calmly as if it were a trip to the country, uncertain up to the last moment whether, after all, it might not pay better to take the train for Baden-Baden instead. If the captain had said to you, "To-morrow morning we shall see Stambul," you would probably have answered, quite calmly, "Indeed? I am very glad to hear it." But suppose, instead, you had brooded over the idea for ten years; had passed many a winter's evening mournfully studying the map of the East; had fired your imagination by reading hundreds of books on the subject; had travelled over one-half of Europe merely to console yourself for not being able to see the other half; had remained nailed to your desk for a whole year with this sole object in view; had made a thousand petty sacrifices and calculations without end; had erected whole rows of castles in the air, and fought many a stiff battle with those of your own household; and finally had passed nine sleepless nights at sea haunted by this intoxicating vision, and so blissfully happy as to have a twinge of something like remorse at the thought of all your loved ones left behind;—then you would have some idea of the real meaning of those words: "To-morrow at daybreak we shall see the first minarets of Stambul;" and instead of replying phlegmatically, "I am glad to hear it," you would have given a great thump on the bulkhead, as I did.

One great source of satisfaction to my friend and myself was our profound conviction that, boundless as our expectations might be, they could not possibly be foiled. About Constantinople there is no uncertainty, and the most pessimistic traveller feels that there, at least, he is safe, since no one has ever been disappointed; and this, moreover, has nothing to do with the charm of its great associations or the fashion of admiring what every one else does. It has a beauty of its own, at once overmastering and triumphant, before which poets, archeologists, ambassadors, and merchants, the princess and the sailor, people of the North and of the South, one and all, break forth into loud exclamations of astonishment. In the opinion of the whole world it is the most beautiful spot on earth. Writers of travels on arriving there at once lose their heads. Perthuisier falls to stammering; Tournefort declares that human language is powerless; Pouqueville thinks himself transported to another world; Gautier cannot believe that what he sees is real; the Viscount di Marcellus falls into ecstasies; La Croix is intoxicated; Lamartine returns thanks to God; and all of them, heaping metaphor upon metaphor, endeavor to make their style more glowing, and search their imaginations in vain for some simile that shall not fall miserably short of their ideas. Chateaubriand alone describes his arrival at Constantinople with such apparent tranquillity of soul as to strongly suggest the idea of stupor, but he does not fail to observe that it is the most beautiful thing in the world; and if the celebrated Lady Montague, in pronouncing a similar opinion, has allowed herself the use of a *perhaps*, she clearly wishes it to be tacitly understood that the first place belongs to her own beauty, of which she had a very high opinion. It is, after all, a cold German who declares that the most beautiful illusions of youth, the very dreams of first love, become poor and insipid when contrasted with the delicious sensations which steal upon the soul at the first sight of those charmed shores, while a learned Frenchman affirms that the first impression made by Constantinople is one of terror.

Imagine, then, if you can, the effect produced by all these impassioned statements on the ardent brains of a clever painter of twenty-four and a bad poet of twenty-eight! But still, not satisfied with even all this illustrious praise of Constantinople, we turned to the sailors to see what they would have to say about it; and here it was the same thing. Ordinary language was felt by even these rough men to be inadequate, and they rolled their eyes and rubbed their hands together in the effort to find unusual words and phrases in which to express themselves, attempting their description in that far-away tone of voice and with the slow, uncertain gestures used by uneducated persons when they try to recount something wonderful. "To arrive at Constantinople on a fine morning," said the helmsman—"believe me, gentlemen, *that is a great moment in a man's life.*"

The weather, too, smiled upon us. It was a fine, calm night; the water lapped the sides of the vessel with a gentle murmuring sound, while the masts and rigging stood out clear and motionless against the sky sparkling with stars. We seemed hardly to move. In the bow a crowd of Turks lay stretched out at full length, blissfully smoking their hookahs with faces turned to the moon, whose light, falling upon their white turbans, made them look like silvery haloes; on the promenade deck was a concourse of people of every nationality under the sun, among them a company of hungry-looking Greek comedians who had embarked at Piræus.

I can see before me now the pretty face of little Olga, one of a bevy of Russian children going with their mother to Odessa, very much astonished at my not understanding her language, and somewhat displeased at having addressed the same question to me three consecutive times without obtaining an intelligible answer. Here on one side a fat, dirty Greek priest, wearing a hat like an inverted bushel-measure, is looking through his glass for the Sea of Marmora, and on the other, an English evangelical clergyman is standing stiff and unyielding as a statue, who for three days past has not spoken to a soul nor looked at any one; near by are two pretty Athenian girls in their little red caps, with hair hanging down over their shoulders, who turn simultaneously toward the water whenever they find any one looking at them, in order to show their profiles, while a little farther off an Armenian merchant is telling the beads of his Greek rosary. Near him is a group of

Hebrews, dressed in their antique costume, some Arabians in long white gowns, a melancholy-minded French governess, and a few of those nondescript personages one always meets in travelling, about whom there is nothing particular to indicate their country or occupation; and in the centre of all this mixed company a little Turkish family, consisting of a father wearing a fez, a veiled mother, and two little girls in trousers, all four curled up under a tent on a pile of many-colored pillows and cushions, and surrounded by a motley collection of luggage of every shape and hue.

How one realized the vicinity of Constantinople! On all sides there was an unwonted gayety, and the faces lit up by the ship's lights were all happy ones. The group of children skipped around their mother shouting the ancient Russian name of Stambul: "Zavegorod! Zavegorod!" Passing near one and another of the little groups, I caught the names of Galata, Pera, Skutari, Bujukdere, Terapia, which acted upon my excited brain like stray sparks from the preliminaries of some grand display of fireworks. Even the sailors were delighted to be nearing a place where, as they said, one forgets, if only for a single hour, all the troubles of life. Among the white turbans in the bow as well there were unusual signs of life: the imaginations of even those sluggish and impassive Mussulmen were stirred as there began to float before their minds the magic outlines of *Ummelunia*, "Mother of the World"—that city, as says the Koran, "which commands on one side the earth, and on two, the sea." It seemed as though, had the engine been stopped, the ship must still have gone on, impelled forward by the sheer force of that impatient longing which throbbed and palpitated from her decks. From time to time, as I leaned over the side and looked down at the water, a hundred different voices seemed to mingle with the murmur of the waves—the voices of all those who cared for me. "Go," they said, "son, brother, friend! Go and enjoy your Constantinople. You have well earned it; now enjoy yourself, and God be with you!"

It was midnight before the passengers began to disperse, my friend and I being the last to go, and then with lingering steps. We could not bear to shut up between four walls an exuberance of joy as compared with which the Circle of Propontis seemed narrow and contracted. Halfway down the stair we heard the captain's voice inviting us to come on the bridge the next morning. "Be up before sunrise," he cried, appearing at the top of the companion-way; "whoever is late will be thrown overboard."

A more superfluous threat was never made since the world began. I did not close my eyes, and I don't believe that the youthful Muhammad II. on that famous night of Adrianople when he tore his bed to pieces, agitated by visions of Constantine's city, tossed and turned more than did I throughout those four hours of expectation. In order to quiet my nerves I tried counting up to a thousand, keeping my eyes fixed on the line of white spray thrown up against my port by the movement of the vessel, humming monotonous tunes set to the throbbing of the engine, but all in vain. I was hot and feverish, my breath was labored, and the night seemed endless. At the first glimmer of dawn I leaped out of bed, to find Yunk already up; we tore into our clothes, and in three bounds were on deck.

Despair! It was foggy.

A thick, impenetrable mist concealed the horizon on every side, and it looked like rain; so the great spectacle of the approach to Constantinople was lost, all our hopes dashed, the voyage, in short, a failure. I was completely stunned.

At this moment the captain appeared, wearing his accustomed cheerful smile. Explanations were unnecessary. The instant his eye fell on us he took in the situation, and, patting me on the shoulder, said, consolingly, "That will be all right; don't give yourselves the slightest concern. This fog, for which you ought to be very thankful, will help us to make the most glorious entrance into Constantinople one could possibly desire. In two hours, you may take my word for it, the sky will be absolutely clear." At these brave words my blood began to circulate freely again, and we followed him to the bridge.

The Turks were already assembled in the bow, seated cross-legged upon strips of carpet, with their faces turned toward Constantinople. Presently the other passengers began to appear, armed with glasses of all sizes and styles, and took their places, one after another, along the port rail of the vessel, like people in the gallery of a theatre waiting for the curtain to rise. A fresh breeze was blowing; no one spoke, but gradually every glass was levelled upon the northern shore of the Sea of Marmora, where, as yet, nothing could be seen.

The fog, however, had lifted so rapidly that it was now little more than a filmy veil hanging over the horizon, while above it the heavens shone out clear and resplendent. Directly ahead of us could be seen indistinctly the little archipelago of the three Isles of the Princes, the *Demonesi* of the ancients, and the favorite pleasure-grounds of the court in the time of the Byzantine Empire, now a popular resort and place of amusement for the people of Constantinople.

Both shores of the Sea of Marmora were still completely hidden.

It was not until an hour had gone by that at last there appeared—

But there is no use in attempting to understand a description of the approach to Constantinople without first having a clear idea of the plan of the city. Supposing the reader to stand facing the mouth of the Bosphorus, that arm of the sea which separates Asia from Europe and connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmora, he will have on his right the continent of Asia, on his left, Europe; here ancient Thrace, there ancient Anatolia. Following this arm, he will find on his left, immediately beyond its mouth, a gulf, or rather an extremely narrow bay, forming with the Bosphorus almost a right angle, and stretching for some miles into the continent of Europe, in the shape of an ox's horn; hence the name Golden Horn, or Horn of Abundance, because, when the capital of Byzantium was here, the wealth of three continents flowed through it. On that point of land, bathed on the one hand by the Sea of Marmora and by the Golden Horn on the other, on the site of ancient Byzantium, rises, on its seven hills, Stambul, the Turkish city; across from it, on the other point, washed by the waters of the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus, lie Galata and Pera, the Frankish cities; while on the Asiatic shore, directly opposite the opening of the Golden Horn, Skutari rises from the sea. Thus what is called Constantinople is, in reality, three large cities separated by the sea—two lying opposite each other, and the third facing them both, and all so near together that from each of the three it is possible to distinguish the buildings of the other two nearly as distinctly as one can see across the widest parts of the Thames or the Seine. The point of the triangle

occupied by Stambul, which curves back toward the Horn, is the celebrated Cape Seraglio, which conceals up to the very last moment, from any one approaching from the Sea of Marmora, the two banks of the Golden Horn; that is to say, the largest and most beautiful part of Constantinople.

It was the captain at last, with his trained sailor's eye, who discovered the first shadowy outline of Stambul.

The two Athenian ladies, the Russian family, the English clergyman, Yunk, I, and a number of others, all of whom were going to Constantinople for the first time, had gathered around him in a group, silent, absorbed, every eye intent on trying to pierce through the fog, when, suddenly throwing his left arm out toward the European shore, he exclaimed, "Ladies and gentlemen, I see the first building!"

It was a white peak, the summit of some very high minaret whose base remained as yet completely hidden. Immediately every glass was levelled at it, and every eye began to burrow in that little rent in the haze as though trying to make it larger. The ship was now steaming rapidly ahead. In a few minutes an uncertain shape was visible beside the minaret, then another, then two, then three, then many more, which, stretching out in an endless line, gradually assumed the appearance of houses. On the right and ahead of us everything was still concealed by the fog. That which was now coming into view was the part of Stambul which extends like the arc of a circle for about three miles, from Cape Seraglio along the northern shore of the Sea of Marmora to the Castle of the Seven Towers; but the Seraglio hill was still invisible. Beyond the houses, one after another, the minarets now flashed into sight, white, lofty, their peaks touched with rose color by the rising sun. Below the houses we could begin to distinguish the dark line of the ancient walls, uneven and tortuous, strengthened at regular intervals by massive towers, their foundations partially washed by the sea-waves, and encircling the entire city. Before long fully two miles of the city lay before us in full view, but, to tell the truth, the sight fell decidedly short of my expectations. It was just here that Lamartine asked himself, "Can this be Constantinople?" and cried, "What a disappointment!" The hills being still hidden, nothing was to be seen but interminable lines of houses along the shore, and the city was apparently perfectly flat. "Captain," I too cried, "is this Constantinople?" The captain seized me by the arm and pointed ahead. "O man of little faith!" said he, "look there!" I looked, and an exclamation of amazement escaped me. A shadowy form, vast, impalpable, towering heavenward from a lofty eminence, rose before us, its graceful outlines still partially obscured by a filmy cloud of vapor, and surrounding it four tall and graceful minarets whose peaks shone like silver as they caught the first rays of the morning sun. "St. Sophia!" cried a sailor, and one of the Athenian ladies murmured in an undertone, "Hagia Sofia!" (Holy Wisdom). The Turks in the bow at once rose to their feet. And now before and around the great basilica were discernible through the fog other vast domes and minarets crowded close together like a forest of gigantic branchless palms. "The mosque of Sultan Ahmed!" cried the captain, pointing; "the Bayezid mosque, the mosque of Osman, the Laleli mosque, the Suleimaniyeh!"



Mosques of Sultan Ahmed and St. Sophia.

But no one was listening. The mist was now rapidly melting away, and in every direction there leaped into view mosques, towers, masses of green, tier above tier of houses. The farther we advanced, the more the city unfolded before us her charming outlines, irregular, picturesque, sparkling, and tinged with every hue of the rainbow, while the Seraglio hill now emerged completely from the fog and stood out clear and distinct against the gray mass of cloud behind it. Four miles of city, all that part of Stambul which overlooks the Sea of Marmora, lay stretched out before us, her black walls and many-colored houses reflected in the limpid water as in a mirror.

Suddenly the vessel came to a standstill. Every one crowded around the captain to know what had happened. He explained that we would have to wait, before proceeding any farther, until the fog had lifted a little more. And indeed the mouth of the Bosphorus was still completely hidden behind a thick veil of mist. In less than a minute, however, this had begun to disperse, and we were able to move forward, howbeit with caution.

We were now approaching the hill of the Old Seraglio, and here the general excitement and curiosity became intense.

"Turn your back," said the captain, "and don't look until we are directly opposite."

I obediently did as I was told, and tried to fix my attention upon a camp-stool, which seemed to dance before my eyes.

"Now!" cried the captain, after a few moments, and I spun around. The boat had again stopped, this time opposite and very close to the Seraglio.

It is a large hill, clothed from top to bottom with cypress, terebinth, fir, and huge plane trees, whose branches, reaching out across the city-walls, throw their shadow on the water below; and from the midst of this mass of verdure, separately and in groups, as though dropped at haphazard, rise in a confused, disorderly mass, the roofs of kiosks and pavilions crowned with gilded domes and galleries, charming little buildings of unfamiliar shape, with grated windows and arabesqued doorways, white, small, half hidden, suggesting a labyrinth of avenues, courtyards, and recesses—an entire city enclosed in a wood, shut off from the world, full of mystery and sadness. The sun was now shining full upon it, but above there still hovered a nebulous veil of haze. No one was to be seen, not the faintest sound could be heard. All the passengers stood perfectly motionless, their eyes fixed upon that hill invested with centuries of associations—glory, pleasure, love, intrigue, bloodshed; the citadel, palace, and tomb of the great Ottoman monarchy. For a little while no one moved or spoke. Suddenly the first mate called out, "Gentlemen, Skutari is in sight!"

Every one turned toward the Asiatic shore. Skutari, the Golden City, barely visible to the naked eye, lay scattered over the summits and sides of her great hills, the morning mist throwing a delicate veil over her radiant beauty, smiling and fresh as though just called into being by the touch of a fairy wand. Who can give any idea of that sight? The language we employ to describe our own cities is altogether inadequate to depict that extraordinary variety of color and form, that marvellous mixture of town and country, at once gay and austere, Oriental and Western, fantastic, graceful, imposing. Imagine a city composed of thousands of crimson and yellow villas, thousands of gardens overflowing with verdure, a hundred snow-white mosques rising in their midst; above it a forest of enormous cypresses, indicating the site of the largest cemetery of the East; on the outer edge huge white barracks, groups of houses and cypresses, villages built on the brows of little hills; beyond them others, again, half hidden in foliage, and over all, the peaks of minarets and summits of domes, sparkling points of light, halfway up the side of a mountain which closes in the horizon as it were with a curtain. A great metropolis scattered throughout an enormous garden and overhanging a shore here broken by steep precipices, there shelving gently down in green gradations to charming little inlets filled with shade and bloom; and below, the blue mirror of the Bosphorus reflecting all this splendor and beauty.

As I stood gazing at Skutari my friend touched me on the elbow to announce the discovery of still another city, and, sure enough, turning toward the Sea of Marmora, there, on the same Asiatic shore and a little beyond Skutari, lay a long string of houses, mosques, and gardens which we had but lately passed in front of, but which, up to this moment, had been entirely hidden by the fog. With the help of the glass it was now easy to distinguish cafés, bazârs, European-looking houses, flights of stairs, the walls of the market-gardens, and boats scattered along the shore. This was Kadi Keui (Village of the Judge), erected on the ruins of ancient Chalcedon, the former rival of Byzantium—that Chalcedon founded six hundred and eighty-four years before Christ by the Megarians, to whom the Delphic Oracle gave the surname of The Blind for having selected that rather than the opposite site, where Stambul is now situated.

"That makes three cities," said the captain, checking them off on his fingers as each moment brought a fresh one into view.

The ship was still lying stationary between Skutari and the Seraglio hill, the fog completely concealing everything on the Bosphorus beyond Skutari, as well as Galata and Pera, which lay directly before us. Boats began to pass close by—barges, steam-launches, sailboats—but no one paid any attention to them. Every eye was glued to that gray curtain which hung over the Frankish city. I trembled with impatience and anticipation. Yet a few moments and there would be unfolded before my eyes that marvellous spectacle which none has here been able to behold unmoved. My hands shook so violently that it was with difficulty I could hold the glass to my eyes. The captain, worthy man, watched my excitement with keen delight, and, presently clapping his hands together, cried, "There it is! there it is!"

And, true enough, there did at last begin to appear through the mist first little specks of white, then the vague outlines of a lofty eminence, then scattered beams of light where some window caught and reflected the sun's rays, and finally Galata and Pera stood revealed before us—a mountain, a myriad of houses, of all colors, heaped one above another, a lofty city crowned with minarets, domes, and cypress trees, and towering over all the monumental palaces of the foreign ambassadors and the great tower of Galata; beneath, the vast arsenal of Top-Khâneh and a forest of shipping; and still, as the fog lifted, more and more of the city came into view stretching along the banks of the Bosphorus; and in bewildering succession there leaped into sight streets and suburbs extending from the hilltops to the water's edge, closely built, interminable, marked here and there with the sparkling white tips of the mosques—line upon line of buildings, little bays, palaces built upon the shore, pavilions, kiosks, gardens, groves; and, dimly outlined through the distant haze, other suburbs still, their roofs alone distinguishable, all gilded by the sun's rays—a luxuriance of color, a profusion of verdure, a succession of vistas, a grandeur, a grace, a glory sufficient to make any one break forth into transports of incoherent delight. Every one on board, however, stood speechless, staring, with mouth and eyes wide open—passengers, seamen, Turks, Europeans, children. Not a whisper was heard. No one knew in which direction to look. On one side lay Skutari and Kadi Keui; on the other, the Seraglio hill; opposite, Galata, Pera, and the Bosphorus. To see it all one had to keep revolving around in a circle like a teetotum, and revolve we did, devouring with our eyes first this and then that, gesticulating, laughing, but speechless with admiration. Heavens above! what moments in a man's life!

But yet the most beautiful and imposing sight of all was to come. We were still lying stationary off Seraglio Point, and until this has been rounded you cannot see the Golden Horn or get the most wonderful of all the views of Constantinople.

"Now, gentlemen and ladies, pay attention!" cried the captain before giving the order to proceed. "This is the *critical moment*; in three minutes we shall be opposite Constantinople."

I felt myself grow hot and cold. For a moment all was still. How my heart beat! How feverishly I waited for that blessed word, "Forward!"

"Forward!" shouted the captain. The ship began to move.

On we go! Kings, princes, potentates, ye great ones of the earth! at that moment I felt nothing but compassion for you. All your wealth and power seemed but little in comparison with my place on that boat, and an empire a poor thing to offer in exchange for one look. 28

A minute passes, then another. We are gliding by Seraglio Point, and see opening before us an enormous space flooded with light and a huge mass of many shapes and colors. The point is passed, and behold! before us lies Constantinople—Constantinople, boundless, superb, sublime! The glory of creation and mankind! A triumph of beauty, far surpassing one's wildest dreams!

And now; poor wretch, attempt to describe it. Profane with your commonplace words that divine vision. Who indeed can describe Constantinople? Chateaubriand? Lamartine? Gautier? What things you have all stammered and stuttered about it! and yet no one can resist trying. Words, phrases, comparisons crowd through the brain and drop off the end of one's pen. I gaze, talk, write, all at the same time, hopeless of success, and yet compelled to the attempt by some overmastering influence.



View of Pera and Galata.

Let us see, then. The Golden Horn lies directly opposite us like a wide river; on each bank there extends a ridge; upon them stretch two parallel lines of the city, embracing eight miles of hill and valley, bay and promontory, a hundred amphitheatres of buildings and gardens, an enormous space dotted over with houses, mosques, bazârs, seraglios, baths, kiosks, of an infinite variety of color and form, and from their midst the sparkling points of thousands of minarets reaching heavenward like great pillars of ivory; then groves of cypresses descending in dark ranks from the hilltops to the water's edge, fringing the outskirts, outlining the inlets; and through all a wealth of vegetation, crowning the heights, pushing up between the roofs, overhanging the water, flinging itself up in radiant luxuriance wherever it can obtain a foothold. To the right, Galata, her foreground a forest of masts and flags; above Galata, Pera, the imposing shapes of her European palaces outlined against the sky; in front, the bridge connecting the two banks, across which flow continually two opposite, many-hued streams of life; to the left, Stambul, scattered over her seven hills, each crowned with a gigantic mosque with its leaden dome and gilded pinnacle: St. Sophia, white and rose-tinted; Sultan Ahmed, flanked by six minarets; Suleiman the Great, crowned by ten domes; the Validêh Sultan, reflected in the waves; on the fourth hill the mosque of Muhammad II.; on the fifth, that of Selim; on the sixth, the seraglio of Tekyr; and, high above everything else, the white tower of the Seraskerat, which commands the shores of two continents from the Dardanelles to the Black Sea. Beyond the sixth hill of Stambul on the one hand, and Galata on the other, nothing can be distinguished save a few vague outlines of buildings, faint indications of towns and villages, broken up by bays and inlets, fleets of little vessels, and groups of trees hardly visible through the blue haze, and which appear more like atmospheric illusions than actual objects. 29

How can one possibly take in all the details of this marvellous scene? For a moment the eye rests upon a Turkish house or gilded minaret close by, but, immediately abandoning it, roams off once more at will into that boundless space of light and color, or scales the heights of those two opposite shores with their range upon range of stately buildings, groves, and gardens, like the terraces of some enchanted city, while the brain, bewildered, exhausted, overpowered, can with difficulty follow in its wake.

An inexpressible majestic serenity is diffused throughout this wonderful spectacle, an indefinable sense of loveliness and youth which recalls a thousand forgotten tales and dreams of boyhood—something aërial, mysterious, overpowering, transporting the imagination and senses far beyond the bounds of the actual. 30

The sky, in which are blended together the most delicate shades of blue and silver, throws everything into marvellous relief, while the water, of a sapphire blue and dotted over with little purple buoys, reflects the minarets in long trembling lines of white; the cupolas glisten in the sunlight; all that mass of vegetation sways and palpitates in the morning air; clouds of pigeons circle about the mosques; thousands of gayly-painted and gilded pleasure-boats flash over the surface of the water; the zephyrs from the Black Sea come laden with the perfumes of a thousand flower-gardens; and when at length, intoxicated by the sights and sounds and smells of this paradise, and forgetful of all else, one turns away, it is only to behold with fresh sensations of wonder and amazement the shores of Asia, with their imposing panorama of beauty; Skutari and the nebulous heights of the Bithynian Olympus; the Sea of Marmora dotted over with little islands and white with sails; and the Bosphorus, covered with shipping, winding away between two interminable lines of kiosks, palaces, and villas, to disappear at last mysteriously amid the most smiling and radiant hillsides of the Orient. To deny that this is the most beautiful sight on earth would be churlish indeed, as ungrateful toward God as it would be unjust to his creation; and it is certain that anything more beautiful would surpass mankind's powers of enjoyment.

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On recovering somewhat from my own first overwhelming sensations I turned to see how the other passengers had been impressed. Every countenance was transfixed. The eyes of the two Athenian ladies were suspiciously moist; the Russian mother had, in that supreme moment, clasped her little Olga to her breast; even the voice of the icy English priest was now heard for the first time, murmuring to himself, "Wonderful! wonderful!"

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The vessel having in the mean time dropped anchor not far below the bridge, we were quickly surrounded by small boats from the shore, which a moment later discharged a rabble of Greek, Armenian, and Hebrew porters upon our decks, and these, while anathematizing the aliens from the other world, at the same time took possession of our property and our persons. After making some feeble show of resistance, I shook hands with the captain, gave a kiss to little Olga, and, bidding our fellow-passengers farewell, went over the side with my friend, where a four-oared barge rapidly transported us to the custom-house. Thence, after threading a labyrinth of tortuous streets, we finally reached our quarters in the Hotel de Byzance on the summit of the hill of Pera.

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FIVE HOURS LATER.

The visions of the morning have disappeared, and Constantinople, that dream of light and beauty, turns out to be a huge city, cut up into a succession of hills and valleys, a labyrinth of human anthills, cemeteries, ruins, and desert-places—a mixture without parallel of civilization and barbarism, reflecting something of every city in the world, gathering within its borders every aspect of human life. That comparatively small part enclosed within the walls forms, as it were, the skeleton of a mighty city; as for the rest, it is a vast aggregation of barracks, an enormous Asiatic encampment, in which swarms a population of every race and religion under the sun. It is a great city in a state of transformation, composed of ancient towns falling into decay, of new ones built but yesterday, and of still others in process of erection. Everything is topsy-turvy; on all sides are seen the traces of some gigantic undertaking—mountains tunnelled through, hills levelled, suburbs razed to the ground, great thoroughfares laid out, heaps of stone, and the traces of disastrous fires, portions of the earth's surface for ever undergoing some alteration at the hand of man. The disorder and confusion and the never-ending succession of strange and unexpected sights make one dizzy. 35

Walk down a stately street, and you find it ends in a precipice; come out of a theatre, and you are surrounded by tombs; climb to the summit of a hill, beneath your feet you discover a forest, while a new city confronts you from some neighboring hilltop; the street you have this moment left suddenly winds away from you through a deep valley half hidden by trees; walk around a house, you discover a bay; descend a lane, farewell to the city: you find yourself in a lonely defile, with nothing to be seen but the sky above you; towns appear and disappear continually. They start into view over your head, beneath your feet, over your shoulder, far off, near by, in sun and shadow, on the tops of mountains and on the shore below. Take a step forward, an immense panorama is spread out before you; backward, and you see nothing at all; lift your head, and the points of a thousand minarets flash before your eyes; turn it, and not one is in sight. The network of streets winds in and out among the hills, overtopping terraces, grazing the edges of precipices, passing beneath aqueducts, to break up suddenly in footpaths leading down some grassy incline to the water's edge, or else, skirting piles of ruins, meanders away among rocks and sand to the open country. Here and there the huge metropolis stops, as it were, to take breath in the solitude of the country, then recommences, more crowded, gay, noisy, bewildering, than before; here it spreads out flat and monotonous, there scales the hillside, disappears over the summit, disperses; then once more gathers itself together. In one section it ferments with life, noise, movement; in another there is the stillness of death; one quarter is all red, another white, a third shines with gilding, a fourth looks like a mountain of flowers: stately city, village, country, garden, harbor, wilderness, market, cemetery, in endless succession, rear themselves, one above another, in such a manner that certain heights command in a single view all the aspects of life which are usually found embraced in an entire province. In every direction a series of strange and unfamiliar shapes is outlined against the sea and sky, so close together and so indented and broken up by the extraordinary variety of architectural forms that the eye becomes confused and the various objects seem to melt one into another. 36

In among the Turkish dwelling-houses European palaces rise suddenly up, spires overtop the minarets, and cupolas crown the garden-terraces, with battlemented walls behind them; roofs of Chinese kiosks appear above the façade of a theatre; barred and grated harems face rows of glazed windows; side by side with open balconies and terraces are found Moorish buildings with recessed windows and small forbidding doorways. Shrines to the Madonna are set up beneath Arabian archways; tombs stand in the courtyards; towers arise amid the hovels; mosques, synagogues, Greek, Catholic, Armenian churches, crowd one upon the other, as though each were striving for the mastery, and, from every spot unoccupied by buildings, cypress and pine, fig and plane trees stretch forth their branches and tower above the surrounding roofs. 37

An indescribable architecture of expedients, following the infinite caprices of the soil, portions of buildings cut up into sections, triangular, upright, prone, surrounded and connected by bridges, props, and defiles, heaped up in confused masses, like huge fragments detached from a mountain-side. 38

At every hundred steps the scene changes. Now you are in a suburb of Marseilles; turn, and it becomes an Asiatic village; another turn, and it is a Greek settlement; still another, a suburb of Trebizond. The language and dress, the faces you meet, the look of the houses in the various quarters, all suggest a different country from the one you have just left; they are bits of France, slices of Italy, samples of England, scraps of Russia. One sees depicted in vivid colors on the great surface of the city that battle which is here being waged between the various groups of Christians on the one hand fighting to repossess themselves of, and Islamism on the other defending with all its remaining strength, the sacred soil of Constantinople. Stambul, once entirely Turkish, is assailed on all sides by settlements of Christians, before whose advance it is slowly giving way all along the banks of the Golden Horn and the shores of the Sea of Marmora; in other directions the conquest is proceeding much more rapidly: churches, hospitals, palaces, public gardens, schools, and factories are rending asunder the Mussulman's quarters, encroaching upon his cemeteries, and advancing from one height to another, until already, on the dismayed soil, there are sketched the vague outlines of another European city, as large as the one now covering the banks of the Golden Horn, and destined one day to embrace the European shore of the Bosphorus. 39



Ancient Fountain.

But from such general observations as these the attention is distracted at every step by some fresh object of interest: on one street it is the monastery of the dervishes, in another a great Moorish building, a Turkish café, a bazâr, a fountain, an aqueduct. In the course of a quarter of an hour, too, one is obliged to alter his gait at least a dozen times. You must descend, mount, climb down some steep incline or up by stairs cut out of the rock, wade through the mud and surmount a thousand different obstacles, threading your way now through crowds of people, then in and out among shrubbery; here stooping to avoid lines of clothes hung out to dry; at one moment obliged to hold your breath, at the next inhaling a hundred delicious odors. From a terrace flooded with light and commanding a magnificent view of the Bosphorus, Asia, and the blue arch of heaven one step will bring you to a network of narrow alley-ways, leading in and out among wretched, half-ruined houses and choked up with heaps of stone and rubbish; from some delicious retreat filled with verdure and bloom you emerge on a dry, dusty waste littered with débris; from a thoroughfare glowing with life, movement, and color you step into some sepulchral recess, where it seems as though the silence had never been broken by the sound of a human voice; from the glorious Orient of one's dreams to quite another Orient, forbidding, oppressive, falling into decay, and suggestive of all that is mournful and depressing. After walking about for a few hours amid this medley of strange sights, one's brain becomes completely confused. Were any one to suddenly put the question to you, "What sort of a place is Constantinople?" you would only stare at him vacantly, quite incapable of giving any intelligible reply. Constantinople is a Babylon, a world, a chaos.—Is it beautiful?—Marvellously.—Ugly?—Horribly so.—Do you like it?—It fascinates me.—Shall you remain?—How on earth can I tell? Can any one tell how long he is likely to stay on another planet?

You return at last to your lodgings, enthusiastic, disappointed, enchanted, disgusted, stunned, stupefied, your head whirling around like that of a person in the first stages of brain fever. This condition gradually gives way to one of complete prostration, utter exhaustion of mind and body; you have lived years in the course of a few hours, and feel yourself aged.

And the population of this huge city?

THE BRIDGE.

The best place from which to see the population of Constantinople is the floating bridge, about a quarter of a mile long, which connects the extreme point of Galata with the opposite shore of the Golden Horn, just below the mosque of the Validêh Sultan. Both banks are European territory, but, notwithstanding this fact, the bridge may be said to connect Europe and Asia, since nothing in Stambul but the ground itself is European, and even those quarters occupied by Christians have taken on an Asiatic character. The Golden Horn, though in appearance a river, in reality separates two different worlds, like an ocean. European news reaches Galata and Pera, and at once it is in every one's mouth, and circulates rapidly, fresh, minute, and accurate, while in Stambul it is heard only like some vague, far-away echo; the fame of worldwide reputations and the most startling events roll back from before that little strip of water as from some insuperable barrier, and across that bridge, daily traversed by a hundred thousand feet, an idea does not pass once in ten years.

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Bridge of Galata.

Standing there, you can see all Constantinople pass by in the course of an hour. Two human currents flow incessantly back and forth from dawn to sunset, affording a spectacle which the market-places of India, the Pekin fetes, or the fairs of Nijnii-Novgorod can certainly give but a faint conception of. In order to get anything like a clear idea you must fix your attention on some particular point and look nowhere else. The instant you allow your eyes to wander everything becomes confused and you lose your head. The crowd surges by in great waves of color, each group of persons representing a different nationality. Try to imagine the most extravagant contrasts of costume, every variety of type and social class, and your wildest dreams will fall short of the reality; in the course of ten minutes and in the space of a few feet you will have seen a mixture of race and dress you never conceived of before.

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Behind a crowd of Turkish porters, who go by on a run, bending beneath the weight of enormous burdens, there comes a sedan chair inlaid with mother-of-pearl and ivory, out of which peeps the head of an Armenian lady; on either side of it may be seen a Bedouin wrapped in his white cape, and an old Turk wearing a white muslin turban and blue caftan; a young Greek trots by, followed by his dragoman dressed in embroidered zouaves; next comes a dervish in his conical hat and camel's-hair mantle, who jumps aside to make room for the carriage of an European ambassador preceded by liveried outriders. One can hardly be said to actually see all of these, only to catch glimpses of them as they flash by. Before you have time to turn around you find yourself surrounded by a Persian regiment in their towering caps of black astrakhan; close behind them comes a Hebrew, clad in a long yellow garment open up the sides; then a dishevelled gypsy, her baby slung in a sack on her back; next a Catholic priest, with his staff and breviary; while advancing among a mixed crowd of Greeks, Turks, and Armenians may be seen a gigantic eunuch on horseback, shouting *Vardah!* (Make way!), and, closely following him, a Turkish carriage decorated with flowers and birds and filled with the ladies of a harem, dressed in green and violet and enveloped in great white veils; behind them comes a Sister of Charity from one of the Pera hospitals, and after her an African slave carrying a monkey, and a story-teller in the garb of a necromancer. One point which strikes the stranger as being singular, although it is in reality the most natural thing in the world, is that all this queer multitude of people pass one another without so much as a glance, just as though it were some London crowd; no one stops; every one hurries on intent upon his own affairs, and out of a hundred faces that pass by not one will wear a smile. The Albanian in his long white garment, with pistols thrust in his belt, brushes against the Tartar clad in sheepskin; the Turk guides his richly-caparisoned ass between two files of camels; close behind the aide-de-camp of one of the imperial princes, mounted on an Arabian charger, a cart rumbles along piled up with the odd-looking effects of some Turkish household. A Mussulman woman on foot, a veiled female slave, a Greek with her long flowing hair surmounted by a little red cap, a Maltese hidden in her black *faldetta*, a Jewess in the ancient costume of her nation, a negress wrapped in a many-tinted Cairo shawl, an Armenian from Trebizond, all veiled in black—a funereal apparition; these and many more follow each other in line as though it were a procession gotten up to display the dress of the various

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nations of the world. It is an ever-changing mosaic, a kaleidoscopic view of race, costume, and religion, which forms and dissolves with a rapidity the eye and brain can with difficulty follow. It is quite interesting to fix your gaze on the footway of the bridge and look for a while at nothing but the feet: every style of footwear that the world has known, from that which obtained in Eden up to the very latest phase of Parisian fashion, goes by—yellow *babbuccie*, the red slipper of the Armenian, turquoise-blue of the Greek, and black of the Israelite—sandals, high boots from Turkistan, Albanian leggings, slashed shoes, *gambass* of the Asia Minor horsemen of all colors, gold-embroidered slippers, Spanish *alpargatas*, feet shod in leather, satin, rags, wood, crowded so close together that in looking at one you are aware of a hundred. And while thus engaged you must be on your guard to avoid being knocked down. Now it is a water-carrier with his huge water-skin on his back, or a Russian lady going by on horseback; now a troop of imperial soldiers wearing the uniform of zouaves, who advance as though charging the enemy; now a procession of Armenian porters, who pass two by two, carrying huge bales of goods suspended from long poles across their shoulders; then a crowd of Turks push their way to right and left through the throng in order to embark on some of the many little steamboats which, starting from the bridge, ply up and down the Bosphorus and Golden Horn. It is one continuous tramp and roar, a murmur of hoarse gutturals and incomprehensible interjections, among which the occasional French or Italian words which reach the ear seem like rays of light seen through a thick darkness. The figures which strike the fancy most forcibly of all are, perhaps, those of the Circassians. These wild, bearded men, who pass with measured tread in groups of four or five, wearing large fur caps like those of the ancient Napoleon guard, and long black caftans, with daggers thrust in the belt and a silver cartridge-box suspended on the breast, look like veritable types of brigands, or as though their sole business in Constantinople might be the sale of a sister or daughter dragged thither by hands already imbued with Russian blood. Then there is the Syrian, clad in a long Byzantine dolman, with a gold-striped handkerchief wrapped about his head; the Bulgarian, in sombre-colored tunic and fur-edged cap; the Georgian, with his casque of dressed leather and tunic gathered into a metal belt; the Greek from the Archipelago, covered with lace, silken tassels, and shining buttons. From time to time it seems as though the crowd were receding somewhat, but it is only to surge forward once more in great, overpowering waves of color crested with white turbans like foam, in whose midst may occasionally be seen a high hat or umbrella or the towering headgear of some European lady tossed hither and thither by that Mussulman torrent.

It is stupefying merely to note the diversity of religions represented. Here gleams the shining pate of a Capuchin father; there towers aloft the *ulema's* Janissary turban; farther on the black veil of the Armenian priest floats in the breeze; *imams* pass in their white tunics; nuns of the Stigmata; chaplains of the Turkish army clad in green and carrying sabres; Dominican brothers; pilgrims returned from Mecca wearing talismans about their necks; Jesuits; dervishes; and these last, queerly enough, carry umbrellas to protect them from the sun, while in the mosques they may be seen tearing their flesh in self-inflicted torture for their sins.

To one who watches attentively a thousand amusing and interesting little incidents detach themselves from the general confusion. Now it is a eunuch, who glares out of the corner of his eye at a young Christian dandy caught peering too curiously into the carriage of his mistress; a French *cocotte*, dressed in the latest fashion, who follows the gloved and bejewelled son of a pasha; a sergeant of cavalry in full-dress uniform, who, stopping short in the middle of the bridge, and, seizing his nose between two fingers, emits a trumpet blast loud enough to make one jump; or a quack, who, in return for some poor wretch's piece of money, makes a cabalistic sign on his forehead supposed to restore his eyesight; here a large family-party, newly arrived, have gotten separated in the crowd: the mother rushes hither and thither, searching for her children, who, on their part, are weeping at the tops of their voices, while the men of the party try to mend matters by laying about them in all directions; a lady from Stambul passes by, and under pretence of adjusting her veil gets a good look at the train of a lady from Pera. Horses, camels, sedan chairs, carriages, ox-carts, casks on wheels, bleeding donkeys, skinny dogs, pass in a long file, dividing the crowd in two. Sometimes a big fat pasha of the *three horse-tails* goes by in a magnificent carriage, followed on foot by a negro, his guard, and his pipe-bearer. The Turks all salute him, touching the forehead and the breast, while a throng of Mussulman beggars, horrible, meagre-looking wretches, with muffled faces and bare chests, hurl themselves at the carriage-windows, begging vociferously for alms. Eunuchs out of employment pass in groups of two and three or a half dozen at a time, with cigarettes in their mouths, easily distinguished by their corpulency, their long arms, and great black cloaks. Pretty little Turkish girls, dressed like boys in green trousers and red or yellow waistcoats, run and jump about with catlike agility, pushing their way through the crowd with soft little crimson-tinted hands; shoe-cleaners with their gilded boxes; wandering barbers, their stool and basin ready at hand; venders of water and Turkish sweetmeats can be seen in every direction, threading their way through the press and shouting out their wares and avocations in Greek and Turkish. At every step you meet a military uniform, officers in fiery and scarlet trousers, their breasts glittering with decorations; grooms of the Seraglio gotten up like generals in command of an army; policemen carrying whole arsenals at their belts; *zeibeks*, or free soldiers, wearing those enormous breeches with pockets behind which give them outlines like the Hottentot Venus; imperial guards with nodding white plumes on their helmets, and breasts covered with gold lace; city guards, who march about carrying handcuffs—Constantinople city guards! One might as well speak of people who had been charged with the duty of keeping down the Atlantic Ocean. One curious contrast is that which is found between the rich clothing on the one hand and the miserable rags on the other, between persons so laden down with the quantity and magnificence of their apparel as to look like walking bazars and others who scarcely may be said to have any apparel at all. The nakedness alone is a noteworthy sight. Every tint of human skin can be found, from the milk-white Albanian to the jet-black slave from Central Africa or blue-black native of Darfur; breasts which look as though they would resound at a blow like a bronze vase or break in pieces like an earthenware pot; hard, oily, wooden surfaces, or shaggy like the hide of a wild boar; brawny arms tattooed with outlines of leaves and flowers or rude representations of ships under full sail, and hearts transfixed by arrows. All such particulars, however, as these cannot possibly be noted in the course of a single visit to the bridge. While you are trying to make out the designs tattooed on an arm, your guide is calling your attention to a Serb, a Montenegrin, a Wallach, an Ukrainian Cossack, a Cossack of the Don, an Egyptian, a native of Tunis, a prince of Imerezia. There is hardly time even to make a note of the different nationalities. It is as though Constantinople still maintained her former position as queen of three continents and capital of twenty tributary kingdoms. Yet even this would hardly account for the extraordinary features of that spectacle, and one amuses himself by fancying that some mighty

deluge has swept over the neighboring continent, causing a sudden influx of immigration. An expert eye can still distinguish in that mighty human torrent the distinctive features and costumes of Caramania and Anatolia, of Cypress and of Candia, of Damascus and Jerusalem—Druses, Kurds, Maronites, Telemans, Pumacs, and Kroats, and all the innumerable variety of the innumerable confederations of anarchies extending from the Nile to the Danube and from the Euphrates to the Adriatic. Those in search of the beautiful and those with a craving for the horrible will find, equally, their wildest hopes surpassed. Raphael would have been in ecstasies, Rembrandt beside himself with delight. The purest examples of Grecian beauty and that of the Caucasian races appear side by side with snub noses and receding foreheads. Women pass with the look and bearing of queens, others who might pose as furies. There are painted faces and faces disfigured by disease and wounds, colossal feet and the tiny feet of the Circassian no longer than your hand; gigantic porters, great fat Turks, and negroes like dried-up skeletons, ghosts of human beings who fill you with horror and pity; every aspect of human life, extremes of asceticism and voluptuousness, utter weariness, radiant luxury, and wasted misery; and, still more remarkable than the variety of human beings, is that of the garments they wear. Any one with an eye for color would find himself in clover. No two persons are dressed alike. Some heads are enveloped in shawls, others crowned with rags, others decked out like savages—shirts and undervests striped or particolored like a harlequin's dress; belts bristling with weapons, some of them reaching from the waist to the arm-pits; Mameluke trousers, knee-breeches, tunics, togas, long cloaks which sweep the ground, capes trimmed with ermine, waistcoats encrusted with gold, short sleeves and balloon-shaped ones, monastic garbs and theatre costumes; men dressed like women, women who seem to be men, and peasants with the air of princes; a ragged magnificence, an exuberance of color, a profusion of ornament, braid, fringe, frippery of all sorts; a childish and theatrical display of decoration, which makes one think of a ball given by the inmates of an insane asylum, who have decked themselves out with the contents of all the peddlers' packs in the world.

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Above the babel of sounds made by all this multitude one hears the piercing cries of the Greek newsboys selling newspapers in all languages under heaven, the stentorian tones of the porters, loud laughter of the Turkish women; the infantile voices of the eunuchs; the shrill falsetto of a blind beggar reciting verses from the Koran; the hollow-resounding noise of the bridge itself as it sways under this multitude of feet; the bells and whistles from a hundred steamboats, whose smoke, coming in great puffs, from time to time envelops the entire throng of passers-by. This vast concourse of people embarks in the boats which leave every moment for Skutari, the villages along the Bosphorus, and the suburbs on the Golden Horn; spreads out over the bazârs and mosques of Stambul, the suburbs of Fanar and Balat, to the most distant points on the Sea of Marmora; flows like an advancing tide in two great currents over the Frankish shore, to the right in the direction of the sultan's palaces, to the left toward the ancient quarters of Pera, and, receding once more across the bridge, is fed by innumerable little streams flowing down the steep, narrow lanes and byways which cover the hillsides of both banks, connecting ten cities and a hundred villages, and binding together Asia and Europe in an intricate network of commerce, intrigue, and mystery, at the mere thought of which one's mind becomes hopelessly confused.

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One would naturally expect all this to make an amusing and enlivening spectacle, but it is quite otherwise: after the first sensations of excitement and wonder have died down the brilliant coloring begins to pale; it no longer wears the aspect of a gay Carnival procession, but humanity itself seems to be passing in review—humanity with all its miseries and follies, its infinite discord of clashing beliefs and irreconcilable customs, a pilgrimage of decayed races and humbled nations; a boundless tide of human misery; wrongs to be set right, stains to be washed out, chains to be broken; an accumulation of tremendous problems which blood alone, and that in torrents, is capable of solving—a sight at once overpowering and depressing. One's interest, too, is rather blunted than aroused by the enormous number and variety of strange sights and objects. What sudden mysterious changes the mind is subject to! Here was I, not a quarter of an hour after reaching the bridge, leaning listlessly against the side, scribbling on the wooden beam with a pencil, and acknowledging, between my yawns, that Madame de Staël was pretty near the truth when she pronounced travelling to be the most melancholy of human pleasures.

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STAMBUL.

In order to restore one's equilibrium after the bewildering scenes of the bridge it is only necessary to follow one of the many narrow streets which wind up the hillsides of Stambul. Here there reigns a profound peace, and you may contemplate at your leisure those mysterious and evasive aspects of Oriental life of which only flying glimpses can be obtained on the other bank amid the noise and confusion of European manners and customs. Here everything is Eastern in its strictest sense. After walking for fifteen minutes the last sounds have died away, the crowds entirely disappeared; you are surrounded on every side by little wooden, brightly-painted houses, whose second stories extend out over the ground floor, and the third again over those; in front of the windows are balconies enclosed with glass and close wooden gratings, which look like little houses thrown out from the main dwelling, and lend to the city an indescribable air of secrecy and melancholy. In some places the streets are so narrow that the overhanging parts of opposite houses nearly touch, and you walk for long distances in the shadow of these human bird-cages and literally beneath the feet of the Turkish women, who pass the greater part of the day in them, seeing nothing but a narrow strip of sky. All the doors are tightly shut, and the windows on the ground floor protected by gratings. Everything breathes of jealousy and suspicion; one seems to be traversing a city of convents. Sometimes the stillness is suddenly broken by a ripple of laughter close at hand, and, looking quickly up, you may discover at some small opening or loophole the flash of a bright eye or a shining lock of hair, which, however, instantly disappears; or, again, you surprise a conversation being carried on in quick, subdued tones across the street, which breaks off suddenly at the sound of your footsteps, and you continue your way wondering what thread of mystery or intrigue you may have broken in your passage. Seeing no one yourself, you have the consciousness of a thousand eyes upon you; apparently quite alone, you yet feel yourself to be surrounded by restless, palpitating life. Wishing, possibly, to pass unobserved, you tread lightly, walk rapidly, but all the same you are watched on all sides. So profound is the silence that the mere opening and shutting of a door or window startles you as though it were some tremendous noise. One might suppose that the aspect of these streets would become monotonous and tiresome, but it is not so. A mass of foliage out of which issues the white point of a minaret, a Turk dressed in red coming toward you, a black servant standing immovable before a doorway, a strip of Persian carpet hanging from a window, suffice to form a picture so full of life and harmony that one could stand gazing at it by the hour. Of the few persons who do pass by, none appear to notice you; only occasionally you hear a voice at your shoulder call out "*Giaour!*" (infidel), and turn just in time to see a boy's head disappearing behind a window-shutter. Again, hearing a door being opened from within, you pause expectantly, fully prepared to see the favorite beauty of some harem come forth in full costume, instead of which an European lady in bonnet and train appears and, with a murmured *Adieu* or *Au revoir*, walks rapidly away, leaving you open-mouthed with astonishment.

In another street, entirely Turkish and silent, you are suddenly startled by the sound of a horn and the stamping of horses' feet; turning to see what it means, you find it difficult to believe your eyes when a large car rolls gayly into sight over some tracks which up to that moment you had not noticed, filled with Turks and Europeans, with its officials in uniform and its printed tariff of fares, for all the world like a *tramway* in Vienna or Paris. The effect of such an apparition, seen in one of those streets, is not to be described: it is like a burlesque or some huge joke, and you laugh aloud as you watch it disappear, as though you had never seen anything of the kind before. With the omnibus the life and movement of Europe seem to vanish, and you find yourself back in Asia, like a change of scene at the theatre. Issuing from almost any of these silent, deserted streets, you come out upon small open spaces shaded by one huge plane tree: on one hand there is a fountain out of which camels are drinking; on the other, a café in front of which a number of Turks recline on mats, smoking and gazing into vacancy; beside the door stands a large fig tree, up whose trunk a vine clammers, extending out over the branches and falling in waving garlands to the ground, and between whose leaves enchanting glimpses are caught of the blue waters of the Sea of Marmora dotted all over with white sails. The flood of light and the death-like stillness give these places a certain character, half solemn, half melancholy, which makes an indelible impression upon the mind: one is carried on and on, drawn, as it were, out of himself by a subtle sense of mystery which steeps the senses little by little, until he loses all idea of time and space and seems to float on a vague cloud of dreams.



Fountain in Court of the Mosque of Ahmed.

From time to time you come upon vast barren tracts devastated by some recent fire; hillsides with a few houses scattered here and there, and grassy spaces between them, intersected with goat-paths; tops of hills from which can be seen hundreds of houses and gardens, streets and lanes, but not a living creature, a wreath of smoke, an open door, or the faintest indication of human life, until one almost begins to think himself alone in the midst of this immense city, and, thinking so, to become a trifle uncomfortable. But just follow one of those steep little streets down to the bottom, and in an instant the whole scene changes. You are now on one of the great thoroughfares of Stambul, flanked by splendid buildings, whose beauty almost defies your powers of admiration. On every side rise mosques, kiosks, minarets, arcades, fountains of marble and lapis lazuli, mausoleums of sultans glowing with arabesques and inscriptions in gold, their walls covered with mosaics, their roofs of inlaid cedar-wood, and everywhere that exuberance of vegetation which, pushing its way through gilded railings and scaling garden-walls, fills the air with the perfume of its blossoms. Here are met the equipages of pashas, aides-de-camp in full uniform, officials, employés, eunuchs belonging to great houses, and files of servants and parasites coming and going in a continual succession between the residences of the ministers: one recognizes the fact that he is in the metropolis of a great empire, and admires it in all its magnificence of display. The brilliant atmosphere and graceful architecture, the murmuring of the fountains, the bright sunshine and delicious coolness of the shade, all affect the senses like subdued music, and a hundred smiling images crowd through the mind. Following these thoroughfares, you emerge upon the large open squares, from which arise the mosques of the various sultans, before whose stately magnificence you pause in wondering awe. Each one of these mighty buildings forms the centre, as it were, of a small separate city, with its colleges, hospitals, stores, libraries, schools, and baths, whose existence is at first hardly suspected, so overshadowed are they by the huge dome which they encircle. The architecture, so simple in appearance when seen from a distance, now presents a mass of detail attracting the eye in all directions at once. There are little cupolas overlaid with lead, oddly-shaped roofs rising one above another, aërial galleries, enormous porticoes, windows broken by little columns, festooned archways, spiral minarets, lines of terraces with open-work carving, and capitals supported on stylobates, doorways and fountains covered with ornament, walls picked out in gold and every color of the rainbow—a mass of carving and fretwork, light, graceful, exquisite, across which the shadows chase each other from great oak and cypress trees and willows, while clouds of birds, issuing from the overspreading branches, fly in slow circles around the interiors of the domes, filling every corner of the immense edifice with harmony. And now, for the first time, you begin to be conscious of a feeling stronger and more underlying than a mere sense of the beautiful. These huge structures seem like the marble witnesses of an order of thought and belief altogether different from that in which you have been born and reared—the imposing framework of a hostile race and faith, testifying in a mute but expressive language of lofty heights and glorious lines to the might of a God who is not your God, and a people before whom your fathers have trembled, filling you with admiration not unmingled with awe, which, for a time at least, checks your curiosity and holds you at a distance.

Within the shady courtyards Turks may be seen at the fountains busied about their ablutions, peasants crouched at the foot of the great pillars, veiled women who pass with deliberate steps beneath the lofty arcades: over all there broods a profound quiet, a tinge of sadness and voluptuousness, whose source you try in vain to discover, exercising your mind as upon some enigma. Galata, Pera—how far away they seem! It is as though you were in another world alone, in a different age. This is the Stambul of Suleiman the Magnificent or Bayezid II.,

and you feel dazed and confused when, on turning away from the square and losing sight of the stupendous monument of the power of the Osmons, you find yourself once more confronted by the Constantinople of to-day, of wood, poverty, and decay, filled with dirt, wretchedness, and misery.

As you go on and on the houses gradually lose their bright coloring, the vine-trellises disappear, moss creeps over the basins of the fountains, the mosques become small and mean, with wooden minarets and cracked, discolored walls, around which brambles and nettles have sprung up; ruined mausoleums, broken stairways, tortuous lanes choked with rubbish and reeking with damp; deserted quarters full of gloom, whose silence is unbroken save for the flapping of birds' wings or the guttural cry of a muezzin calling out the word of God from some distant unseen minaret. On the face of no city in the world is written in such plain characters the nature of her people's beliefs. Everything grand or beautiful comes from God, or the sultan—His representative upon earth. All the rest, being merely temporary, is not worthy of consideration and bears the stamp of an utter indifference to mundane things. This pastoral tribe has become a nation, but the instinctive love of nature, of a life of contemplation and idleness, is as strong among its people as ever, and has lent to their metropolis the look of an encampment. Stambul is not a city; she neither works nor thinks, nor does she create; civilization knocks at her doors, lays siege to her streets, and she dozes and dreams in the shadow of her mighty mosques and pays no heed. It is more like a city let loose, scattered, disfigured, representing rather the halt of a wandering race than the stronghold of an established state; a number of cities sketched in outline, an immense spectacular show, rather than a great metropolis, of which no just idea can be obtained without traversing every part.

Taking, then, for our starting-point the first hill, we are at that point of the triangle bathed by the Sea of Marmora. This is, so to speak, the crown of Stambul, an imposing district crowded with associations and filled with magnificent buildings. Here is the ancient Seraglio, occupying the site where arose first, Byzantium, with her acropolis and temple of Jupiter, and then the palace of the empress Placidia and the baths of Arcadius; here stand the mosques of St. Sophia and the Sultan Ahmed; and here is the At-Meidan, covering the space formerly occupied by the Hippodrome, where once, in the midst of an Olympus of marble and bronze and urged on by the frantic cries of a multitude clad in silk and purple, gilded chariots were driven furiously seven times around the course beneath the impassive gaze of the pearl-bedecked emperors. Descending the first hill into a shallow valley, we come upon the western walls of the Seraglio, marking the confines of ancient Byzantium,^A and directly before us rises the Sublime Porte, containing the offices of the prime minister, foreign minister, and minister of the interior—silent, gloomy regions where seem gathered all the sombreness and melancholy of the fate of the empire.

^A Other authorities place the walls of ancient Byzantium considerably farther west than this point.
—TRANS.

From here we ascend the second hill, where rise the Nûri Osmaniye mosque (Light of Osman) and the Burnt Column of Constantine, formerly surmounted by a bronze statue of Apollo, whose head was a likeness of the great emperor himself. This column marked the centre of the forum, and was surrounded by marble porticoes, triumphal arches, and statues. On the farther side of this hill opens the Valley of Bazârs, extending from the Bayezid mosque all the way to that of the Validêh Sultan, and including a huge labyrinth of covered streets filled with noise and confusion and crowded with people, from which you issue with your ears deafened and your head in a whirl.

Upon the summit of the third hill, overlooking both the Sea of Marmora and the Golden Horn, stands the gigantic rival of St. Sophia, the mosque of Suleiman—*joy and glory of Stambul*, as it is called by the Turkish poets—and the marvellous tower of the minister of war, erected on the ruins of the ancient palace of the Constantines, at one time occupied by Muhammad the Conqueror, and converted later on into a seraglio for the old sultanas.



Burnt Column of Constantine.

Between the third and fourth hills the enormous aqueduct of the emperor Valens stretches like an aerial bridge composed of two tiers of delicate arches, around which vines trail and clamber, falling in graceful festoons as far as the roofs of the houses crowded together in the valley beneath. 71

Passing under the aqueduct, we now ascend the fourth hill. Here, on the ruins of the celebrated church of the Holy Apostles, founded by the empress Helena and rebuilt by Theodosius, rises the mosque of Muhammad II., surrounded by schools, hospitals, and khâns. Alongside the mosque are the slave-bazâr, the baths of Muhammad, and the granite column of Marcian surmounted by a marble capital, on which is a cippus still ornamented with the imperial eagles. Near by is the Et-Meidan, where the famous massacre of the Janissaries took place.

Traversing another valley, likewise closely built up, we mount the fifth hill, surmounted by the mosque of Selim, near the site of the ancient cistern of St. Peter, now converted into a garden. Beneath us, along the shores of the Golden Horn, extends Fanar, the Greek quarter and seat of the Patriarch, where ancient Byzantium has taken refuge, the scene of the revolting carnage of 1821.

Descending into a fifth valley and ascending a sixth hill, we find ourselves upon the territory once occupied by the eight cohorts of Constantine's forty thousand Goths, beyond the circuit of the earlier walls, which only embraced the fourth hill: this is the precise spot assigned to the seventh cohort, hence the name Hebdomon given to that quarter.

On the sixth hill may be seen still standing the walls of the palace^B of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, where the emperors were formerly crowned, now called by the Turks Tekfûr Serai—Palace of the Princes. At the foot of the hill lies Balat, the Ghetto of Constantinople, a filthy quarter extending along the banks of the Horn as far as the city-walls: and beyond Balat is the ancient suburb of Blachernæ, where once arose the mighty palace with its gilded roofs, a favorite resort of the emperors, and famous for the sacredness of the relics contained in the church erected by the empress Pulcheria. Now the whole quarter is filled with decay and ruin and melancholy. At the Blachernæ begin the turreted walls which extend from the Golden Horn across to the Sea of Marmora, enclosing the seventh hill, on which stood the Forum of Arcadius, and where may still be seen the pedestal of the column of Arcadius—the largest and most eastern of the hills of Stambul, between which and the other six flows the little river Lycus, which, entering the city near the Charsiou^C Gate, empties itself into the Sea of Marmora near the ancient gate of Theodosius. 72

^B Prof. A. Van Millingen places the site of the Hebdomon Palace on the shore of the Sea of Marmora, outside the walls, near the village of Makri Keui; other authorities state that there are unanswerable arguments in favor of this view.—TRANS.

^C The Lycus enters the city near the Gate of Pusæus and empties into the Sea of Marmora at Vlanga-Bostan.—TRANS.

From the walls of the Blachernæ we overlook the suburb of Ortajilar, inclining gently to the water's edge and crowned with its many gardens; beyond it lies that of Eyûb, the consecrated soil of the Mussulman, with its charming mosques and vast cemetery shaded by a forest of cypresses and white with mausoleums and tombstones; back of Eyûb is the elevated plain which was formerly used as a military camp, and where the legions elevated the newly-made emperors upon their shields;^D and beyond this, again, other villages are seen, their bright colors set in a framework of green woods and bathed by the farthest waters of the Golden Horn.

^D This ceremony more probably took place near Makri Keui on the Sea of Marmora.—TRANS.

Such is Stambul, truly a divine vision. But when it is remembered that this huge Asiatic village surmounts the ruins of that second Rome, of that great museum of treasures stripped from all Italy, from Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, one's heart sinks within him: the mere thought of such an accumulation of works of art makes one dizzy. And where are they now, those great arcades which traversed the city from wall to sea, those gilded domes and colossal equestrian statues which surmounted the mighty columns before baths and amphitheatres, those brazen sphinxes seated upon pedestals of porphyry, those temples and palaces which once reared their mighty façades of granite in the midst of an aerial throng of marble deities and silver emperors? All have disappeared or been changed past recognition. The equestrian statues of bronze have been recast into guns, the copper coverings of the obelisks converted into money, the sarcophagi of the emperors turned into fountains. The church of St. Irene is an armory: the cistern of Constantine^E is a workshop; the pedestal of the column of Arcadius is occupied by a blacksmith; the Hippodrome is a horse-market; the foundations of the royal palaces are heaps of stones overgrown with ivy; the pavements of the amphitheatre, grass-grown cemeteries. A few inscriptions, half obliterated by fire or defaced by the simetars of the invaders, are all that remain to tell us that on these hills once stood the marvellous metropolis of the Empire of the East. And over all this mass of ruin and decay Stambul sits brooding, like some odalisque above a sepulchre, awaiting her hour.

^E The Cistern Basilica, ascribed to Constantine the Great, is still used for its original purpose. The Cistern Philoxenes is occupied by silk-spinners.—TRANS.

AT THE HOTEL.

And now, if my readers will kindly accompany me back to the hotel, we will rest for a while. The greater part of what I have described thus far having been seen by my friend and myself on the very day of our arrival, one may easily imagine what a condition our brains were in as we wended our way toward the hotel at about nightfall. As we passed through the streets neither of us opened our lips, but on reaching our room we dropped on the sofa, and, facing about, asked each other simultaneously,

"Well, what do you think of it? How does it strike you?"

"Fancy my having come here to paint!"

"And I to write!"

And we laughed in each other's faces with amused compassion.

Indeed, that evening and for many days after His Majesty Abdul-Aziz might have offered me a province in Asia Minor as a reward for a half-dozen lines of description of the capital of his state, and I could not have produced them, so true is it that you must get a little distance away from great objects before you can describe them, and if you wish to remember them correctly, you must first forget them somewhat.

And then how could one possibly do any writing in a room from whose windows could be seen the Bosphorus, Skutari, and the summit of the Olympus? The hotel was a sight in itself. At all hours of the day people of every country in the world were coming and going through the halls and corridors, up and down the stairs. Every evening twenty different nationalities were represented at table. I could not get the idea out of my head during dinner that I must be an envoy sent out by the Italian government, and that it devolved upon me to introduce some grave question of international importance with the dessert. There were many charming countenances of ladies; rough, uncombed artist heads; seamy adventurers lying in wait for your money; profiles like those of the Byzantine Virgin, lacking nothing but the golden nimbus; queer faces and sinister ones; and every day this motley company changed. At dessert, when every one was talking, it sounded like the Tower of Babel. On the day of our arrival we struck up an acquaintance with a party of Russians infatuated with Constantinople, and after that every evening, when we met at table, we would compare notes. Each one had visited some point of interest during the day and had some interesting experience to relate. This one had been to the top of the Serasker Tower, that one to the Eyûb cemetery; another had spent the day in Skutari; another was just back from a trip on the Bosphorus. The conversation glowed with vivid descriptions, life, color, and when one's command of language failed him the delicious perfumed wines of the Archipelago were at hand to loose his tongue and stimulate him to fresh efforts. There were, it is true, some fellow-countrymen of mine there who made me furiously angry—moneyed idiots who from soup to dessert never left off abusing Constantinople, and Providence for bringing them there. There were no sidewalks, the theatres were badly lighted, there was no way of passing the evening—apparently they had come to Constantinople to pass their evenings. One of them having made the trip on the Danube, I asked him how he had liked the famous river, upon which he assured me that there was no place on earth where they understood so well how sturgeon should be cooked as on the Austrian Royal and Imperial line of steamboats! Another was a charming example of the lady-killer style of traveller, whose main object in going about the world is to make conquests, carefully recorded in a notebook

kept for the purpose. He was a tall, lanky blond, liberally endowed with the greatest of the three gifts of the Holy Spirit. Whenever the conversation turned upon Turkish women, he would fix his eyes upon his plate with a meaning smile and take no part in it, except for an occasional word or two, when he would break off suddenly, taking a sip of wine as though he feared he had said too much. He always hurried into dinner a little behind time, with an important air suggestive of his having been unavoidably detained by the Sultan, and between the courses would busy himself in changing mysterious-looking little notes from one pocket to another, evidently intended to look like *billets-doux* from frail fair ones, but which, oddly enough, bore the unmistakable stamp of hotel-bills.

But one certainly does run across all sorts of queer subjects in the hotels of those cosmopolitan cities: no one would believe it without seeing for himself. For instance, there was a young Hungarian there, about thirty years old, a tall, nervous fellow with a pair of diabolical eyes and a quick, feverish way of talking. After acting for some time as private secretary to a rich Parisian, he had enlisted among the French Zouaves in Algiers, was wounded and taken prisoner by the Arabs, and, escaping later from Morocco, had made his way back to Europe, where he hastened to The Hague, hoping to receive an appointment as officer in the war with the *Achins*; failing in this, he determined to enlist in the Turkish army, but while passing through Vienna on his way to Constantinople for that purpose he had gotten mixed up in some affair about a woman. In the duel which ensued he had received a ball in his neck, the scar from which could still be seen. Unsuccessful at Constantinople as well, "What," said he, "is there left for me to do?—*je suis enfant de l'aventure*. Fight I must. Well, I have found the means of getting to India;" and he brought out a steamer ticket. "I shall enlist as an English soldier: there is always some fighting going on in the interior, and that is all I care for. Killed? Well, what if I am? My lungs are all gone, anyhow."

Another queer creature was a Frenchman whose life seemed to have been one prolonged struggle with the postal authorities all over the world. He had lawsuits pending with the post-office departments of Austria, France, and England; he wrote protesting articles to the *Neue Freie Presse*, and fired off telegraphic messages of defiance to every post-office on the Continent; not a day went by without his having some noisy altercation at a window where mail was received or distributed; he never, by any chance, received a letter on time or wrote one that reached its destination. At table he would give us an account of all his misfortunes and consequent disputes, invariably winding up with the statement that the postal system had been the means of shortening his life.

Then there was a Greek lady with a strange, wild look and very curiously dressed: she was always alone, and every day would start suddenly up in the middle of dinner and leave the table after making a cabalistic sign over her plate whose significance no one was ever able to make out.

I have never forgotten, either, a good-looking young Wallachian couple, he about twenty-five, she just grown, who only appeared one evening: it was an undoubted case of elopement, for if you looked fixedly at them they both turned red and appeared uneasy, and every time the door opened they jumped as though they were on springs.

Let me see: what others can I remember? Hundreds, I suppose, were I to give my mind to it. It was like a magic-lantern show.

On the days when the steamers were due my friend and I used to find the greatest amusement in watching the new arrivals as they came into the hotel, exhausted, confused, some of them still under the influence of the approach to Constantinople—countenances which seemed to say, "What world is this? What on earth have we dropped into?" One day a boy passed us, that instant landed; he was entirely beside himself with joy at having actually reached Constantinople, the culmination of his dreams, and was squeezing his father's hand between both his own in an ecstasy of delight, while the father, equally moved by the sight of his son's happiness, was saying, "*Je suis heureux, de te voir heureux, mon cher enfant.*"

We used to pass the hot part of the day gazing out of our windows at the Maiden's Tower, which rises up, white as snow, from a solitary rock in the Bosphorus just opposite Skutari, and while we told each other stories about the legend of the young prince of Persia who sucked the poison from the arm of the beautiful sultana bitten by a snake, a little fellow of five years old would chatter across at us from the window of an opposite house, where he appeared every day at the same hour.

Everything about that hotel was queer: among other things, we would run every evening against one or two doubtful-looking characters hovering around in front of the entrance. They evidently gained a livelihood by providing artists' models, and, taking every one for a painter, would assail all who came and went with the same low-voiced inquiries: "A Turk? A Greek? An Armenian? A Jewess? A Negress?"

CONSTANTINOPLE.

But suppose, now, we turn our attention again to Constantinople itself, and wander about as unrestrainedly as birds of the air? It is a place where one may give free rein to his caprices. You can light your cigar in Europe and knock the ashes off in Asia, and, getting up in the morning, ask yourself what part of the world it would be pleasant to visit during the day, with two continents and two seas to choose from. Saddled horses stand waiting for you in every square; boats with their sails spread are ready to take you anywhere you may choose to go; steamboats lie at every pier awaiting nothing but the signal to depart; *kâiks* manned with rowers and skiffs fitted with sails crowd the landing-places; while an army of guides, speaking every language of Europe, is at your disposal for as long a time as you may want any of them. Do you care to hear an Italian comedy? see the Dancing Dervishes? listen to the buffooneries of Kara-gyuz, the Turkish Punchinello? be treated to the licentious songs of the Parisian café chantant? watch the gymnastic performances of a band of gypsies? listen to an Arabian story-teller? attend a Greek theatre? hear an *imam* preach? see the Sultan pass on his way to the mosque? You have but to say what you prefer and it is ready at hand. Every nationality is at your service—Armenians to shave you, Hebrews to clean your shoes, Turks to row your boat, negroes to dry you after the

bath, Greeks to bring your coffee, and one and all to cheat you. Perhaps you are heated from your walk? here are ices made from the snows of Olympus. Thirsty? you can drink the waters of the Nile as the Sultan does. Should your stomach be a little out of order, here is water from the Euphrates to set it straight, or, if you are nervous, water from the Danube. You can dine like the Arab of the desert or a gourmand of the *Maison dorée*. If you want to doze and drowse, there are the cemeteries; to be stirred up and excited, the bridge of the Validêh Sultan; to dream dreams and see visions, the Bosphorus; to pass Sunday, the Archipelago of the Princes; to see Asia Minor, Mt. Bûlgurlû, the Golden Horn, the Galata Tower, the world, the Serasker Tower. It is, above all, a city of contrasts. Things which we never think of connecting in our minds are seen there at a single glance side by side.

Skutari is the starting-point for the caravans for Mecca, and also for the express trains for Brusa, the ancient metropolis; the Sofia railroad passes close by the mysterious walls of the old Seraglio; Catholic priests bear the Holy Sacrament through the streets escorted by Turkish soldiers; the common people have their festivals in the cemeteries; life and death, sorrow and rejoicing, follow so close upon one another's heels as to seem all a part of the same function. There are seen the movement and energy of London side by side with the lethargic inertia of the East. The greater part of existence is led in public before your eyes, but over the private side of life there hangs a close, impenetrable veil of mystery; under that absolute monarchy there exists a liberty without bounds.

It is impossible, for several days at least, to get a clear impression of anything: it seems every moment that if the disorder is not quelled at once a revolution must break out. Every evening you feel, on reaching your lodgings, as though you had just returned from a long journey, and in the morning ask yourself incredulously if Stambul can really be here, close at hand. There seems to be no place where you can go to get your brain a little clear; one impression effaces another; you are torn by conflicting desires; time flies. You think you would like to spend the rest of your life here, and the next moment wish you could leave to-morrow. And when it comes to attempting a description of this chaos—well, there are moments when you are strongly tempted to bundle together all the books and papers on your table and pitch the whole thing out of the window.

ALONG THE GOLDEN HORN.

It was not until the fourth day after our arrival that my friend and I attempted to introduce anything like method into our sightseeing. We were on the bridge quite early in the morning, still uncertain as to how we would spend the day, when Yunk proposed that we should make our first regular expedition with tranquil minds and a well-defined route for purposes of study and observation. "Let us," said he, "explore thoroughly the northern bank of the Golden Horn, if we have to walk till nightfall to do it; we can breakfast in some Turkish restaurant, take our noonday nap under a sycamore tree, and come home by water in a *käik*." The suggestion being accepted, we provided ourselves with a stock of cigars and small change, and, after glancing over the map of the city, set forth in the direction of Galata. 87

If the reader really cares to know anything about Constantinople, I am afraid he will have to make up his mind to go too, with the clear understanding, however, that whenever he finds himself getting bored he is at perfect liberty to leave us. 88

GALATA.

On reaching Galata the excursion begins. Galata is situated on the hill which forms the promontory between the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus, the former site of ancient Byzantium's great cemetery. It is now the "city" of Constantinople. Its streets, almost all of them narrow and tortuous, are lined with restaurants, confectioners', barbers', and butchers' shops, Greek and Armenian cafés, business-houses, merchants' offices, workshops, counting-houses—dirty, ill-lighted, damp, and narrow, like the streets in the lower parts of London. A hurrying, pushing throng of foot-passengers comes and goes all day long, now and then crowding to right and left to make room in the middle of the street for the passage of porters, carriages, donkeys, or omnibuses. Almost all the business conducted in Constantinople flows through this quarter. Here are the Bourse, the custom-house, the offices of the Austrian Lloyd and the French express company, churches and convents, hospitals and warehouses. An underground railroad connects Galata and Pera. Were it not for the ever-present turban or fez, one would hardly know he was in the East at all. On every side is heard French, Italian, and Genoese. The Genoese are, in fact, almost on their native soil here, and are still somewhat inclined to assume the airs of proprietors, as in the days when they opened and closed the harbor at their will and replied to the emperor's threats with volleys from their cannon. Of this ancient glory, however, nothing now remains except a few old houses supported on great pilasters and heavy arches, and the ancient edifice which was once the residence of the Podesta. 89

Old Galata has almost entirely disappeared. Thousands of squalid houses have been razed to the ground to make room for two wide streets, one of which mounts to the summit of the hill toward Pera, while the other runs parallel with the sea-wall from one end of Galata to the other. My friend and I took the latter, seeking refuge from time to time in some shop or other when a huge omnibus rolled by, preceded by Turks stripped to the waist, who cleared the street by means of long sticks, with which they laid about them. At every step some fresh cry assailed the ear, Turkish porters yelling, "*Sacun ha!*" (Make room!); Armenian water-carriers calling out, "*Varme su!*" and the Greek, "*Crio nero!*" Turkish donkey-drivers crying, "*Burada!*" venders of sweetmeats, "*Scerbet!*" newsboys, "*Neologos!*" Frankish cab-drivers, "*Guarda! guarda!*" 90

After walking for ten minutes we were completely stunned. Coming to a certain place, we noticed with surprise that the paving of the street suddenly ceased: it had evidently been removed quite recently. We stopped to examine the roadway and discover, if possible, some reason for this eccentricity, when an Italian shopkeeper, seeing what we were about, came to the rescue and satisfied our curiosity. This street, it seemed, led to the Sultan's palace, and a few months previously, while the imperial cortège was passing along it, the horse of His Majesty Abdul-Aziz stumbled and fell. The good Sultan, much annoyed by this circumstance, commanded that the pavement should be removed all the way from the spot where the accident occurred, to the palace; which of course had been done. Fixing upon this memorable spot as the eastern boundary of our walk, we now turned our backs upon the Bosphorus and proceeded, by a series of dark, crooked little streets, in the direction of the 91

TOWER OF GALATA.

The city of Galata is shaped like an open fan, of which the tower, placed on the crest of the hill, represents the pivot. This tower is round, very lofty, dark in color, and terminates in a conical point formed by a copper roof, directly beneath which runs a line of large glazed windows, forming a sort of gallery enclosed with glass, where a lookout is kept night and day ready to give warning of the first appearance of fire in any part of the immense city. The Galata of the Genoese extended as far as this tower, which stands on the exact line of the walls which once divided it from Pera—walls of which at present no trace remains;^F nor is the present tower the same as that ancient Tower of Christ, erected in memory of the Genoese who fell in battle, having been rebuilt by Mahmüd II., and prior to that restored by Selim III.,^G but it is none the less a monument to the glory of Genoa, and one upon which no Italian can gaze without feeling some pride at the thought of that handful of soldiers, merchants, and sailors—haughty, audacious, proud, stubborn—who for centuries floated the flag of the mother republic from its summit and treated with the emperors of the East as equals. 91

^F A few traces of these walls may still be seen near the Galata Tower.—TRANS.

^G The Galata Tower, called in the Middle Ages the Tower of Christ or of the Cross, was built in

1348, probably on the foundations of an earlier Byzantine tower ascribed to Anastasius Dicorus, and in the present century was repaired by Mahmûd II.—TRANS.



Tower of Galata.

Immediately beyond the tower we came upon a Mussulman cemetery.

THE GALATA CEMETERY.

This is called the Galata Cemetery. It is a great forest of cypress trees, extending from the summit of the hill of Pera all the way down the steep declivity, nearly to the edge of the Golden Horn, and casting its thick shadows over myriads of little stone and marble pillars—inclining at every angle and scattered irregularly over the hillside. Some of these are surmounted by round turbans on which may be seen traces of coloring and inscriptions; others are pointed at the top, many lie prone upon their sides, while from others the turbans have been cut clean off, making one fancy that they belong to Janissaries, whom, even after death, Sultan Mahmûd took occasion to degrade and insult. The greater part of the graves are merely indicated by square mounds of earth, having a stone at either end, upon which, according to Mussulman belief, the two angels Nekir and Munkir take their seats to judge the soul of the departed. Here and there may be seen small enclosures surrounded by a low wall or railing, in the middle of which stands a column surmounted by a huge turban, and all around it other smaller columns: this is the grave of some pasha or person of distinction buried in the midst of his wives and children. Footpaths wind in and out among the graves and trees, crossing and recrossing one another in all directions from one end of the cemetery to the other. A Turk seated in the shade smokes tranquilly; boys run about and chase each other among the tombs; here and there cows are grazing, and a multitude of turtle-doves bill and coo among the branches of the cypress trees; groups of veiled women pass from time to time; and through the leaves and branches glimpses are caught of the blue waters of the Golden Horn streaked with long white reflections from the minarets of Stambul.

PERA.

Coming out of the cemetery, we passed once more close to the base of the Galata Tower and took the principal street of Pera. Pera lies more than three hundred feet above the level of the sea, is bright and cheerful, and overlooks both the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. It is the "West End" of the European colony, the quarter where are to be found the comforts and elegancies of life. The street which we now followed is lined on both sides with English and French hotels, cafés of the better sort, brilliantly lighted shops, theatres, foreign consulates, clubs, and the residences of the various ambassadors, among which towers the great stone palace of the Russian embassy, commanding Galata, Pera, and the village of Fundukli on the shore of the Bosphorus, for

all the world like a fortress.

The crowds which swarm and throng these streets are altogether unlike those of Galata. Hardly any but stiff hats are to be seen, unless we except the masses of flowers and feathers which adorn the heads of the ladies: here are Greek, Italian, and French dandies, merchant princes, officials of the various legations, foreign navy officers, ambassadors' equipages, and doubtful-looking physiognomies of every nationality. Turkish men stand admiring the wax heads in the hairdressers' windows, and the women pause open-mouthed before the showcases of the milliners' shops. The Europeans talk and laugh more loudly here than elsewhere, cracking jokes in the middle of the street, while the Turks, feeling themselves, as it were, foreigners, carry their heads less high than in the streets of Stambul.

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As we walked along my friend suddenly called my attention to the view, behind us, of Stambul. Sure enough, there lay the Seraglio hill, St. Sophia, and the minarets of the mosque of Sultan Ahmed, all faintly veiled in blue mist—an altogether different world from the one in which we stood. "And now," said he, "look there!" Following the direction of his finger, I read the titles of some of the books displayed in the window of an adjacent stationer's shop—*La Dame aux Camelias*, *Madame Bovary*, *Mademoiselle Giraud ma Femme*—and experienced so curious a sensation at the rapid and violent contrast thus presented that for some moments I was obliged to stand quite still in order to adjust my ideas. At another time I stopped my companion to make him look in a wonderful café we were passing. It was a long, wide, dim corridor, ending in a large open window, through which we beheld, at what seemed to be an immense distance, Skutari flooded with sunlight.

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When we had proceeded for some distance along the Grande Rue de Pera and nearly reached the end, we were startled by hearing a voice, quite close at hand, exclaiming in tones of thunder, "Adèle, I love thee! I love thee better than life itself! I love thee even as much as it is given to men to love upon earth!" We gazed at one another in astonishment. Where on earth did the voice come from? Looking about us, we discovered on one side of the street a wooden fence through the cracks of which a large garden could be seen filled with benches, and at the farther end a stage on which a troupe of actors were rehearsing the performance for the evening. A Turkish lady not far from us stood peeping in as well, and laughed with great enjoyment at the scene, while an old Turk, passing by, shook his head disapprovingly. Suddenly with a loud shriek the lady fled down the street; other women in the neighborhood echoed the shriek and turned their backs rapidly. What could have happened? Turning around, we beheld a Turk about fifty years old, well known throughout all Constantinople, who elected to go about the streets clad with the same severe simplicity which the famous monk Turi was so anxious to impose upon all good Mussulmen during the reign of Muhammad IV.; that is, stark naked from head to foot. The wretched creature advanced, leaping on the stones, shouting and breaking forth into loud bursts of laughter, followed by a crowd of ragamuffins making a noise like that of the infernal regions. "It is to be devoutly hoped that he will be promptly arrested," said I to the doorkeeper of the theatre. "Not the smallest likelihood of anything of the sort," replied he; "he has been going about like that for months." In the mean while I could see people all the way down the street coming to the doors of the shops, women getting out of the way, young girls covering their faces, doors being shut, heads disappearing from the windows. And this thing goes on every day, and no one so much as gives it a thought!

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On issuing from the Grande Rue de Pera we find ourselves opposite another large Mussulman cemetery shaded by groves of cypress trees and enclosed between high walls. Had we not been informed later on of the reason for those walls, we should certainly never have guessed it. They had evidently been quite recently erected, to prevent, it would seem, the woods consecrated to the repose of the dead from being converted into a trysting-spot where the soldiers from the neighboring artillery barracks were wont to meet their sweethearts. A little farther on we came upon the barracks, a huge, solid, rectangular structure, built by Shalil Pasha in the Moorish style of the Turkish Renaissance, its great portal flanked by light columns and surmounted by the crescent and golden star of Muhammad, and having balconies and small windows ornamented with carving and arabesques. In front of the barracks runs the Rue Dgiedessy, a continuation of the Grande Rue de Pera, on the other side of which stretches an extensive parade-ground; beyond that, again, are other suburbs. During the week this neighborhood is buried in the most profound silence and solitude, but on Sunday afternoons it is crowded with people and equipages, all the gay world of Pera pouring out to scatter itself among the beer-gardens, cafés, and pleasure-resorts which lie beyond the barracks. It was in one of these cafés that we broke our fast—the café *Belle Vue*, a resort of the flower of Pera society, and well deserving its name, since from its immense gardens, extending like a terrace over the summit of the hill, you have, spread out before you, the large Mussulman village of Fundukli, the Bosphorus covered with ships, the coast of Asia dotted over with gardens and villages, Skutari with her glistening white mosques—a luxuriance of color, green foliage, blue sea, and sky all bathed in light, which form a scene of intoxicating beauty. We arose at last unwillingly, and both of us felt like niggards as we threw our eight wretched sous on the counter, the bare price of a couple of cups of coffee after having been treated to that celestial vision.

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THE GREAT FIELD OF THE DEAD.

Coming out of the Belle Vue, we found ourselves in the midst of the Grand Champs des Morts, where the dead of every faith except the Jewish are buried in distinct cemeteries. It is a vast, thick wood of cypress, sycamore, and acacia trees, in whose shadow are thousands of white tombstones, having the appearance, at a little distance, of the ruins of some great building. In between the trunks of the trees distant views are caught of the Bosphorus and the Asiatic coast. Broad paths wind in and out among the graves, along which groups of Greeks and Armenians may be seen passing to and fro. On some of the tombs Turks are seated cross-legged, gazing fixedly at the Bosphorus. One experiences the same delicious sense of refreshment and peace and rest, as on entering a vast, dim cathedral on some hot summer's day.

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We paused in the Armenian cemetery. The stones here are all large, flat, and covered with inscriptions cut in

the regular and elegant characters of the Armenian language, and on almost every one there is some figure to indicate the trade or occupation of the deceased. There are hammers, chairs, pens, coffers, and necklaces; the banker is represented by a pair of weights and scales, the priest by a mitre, the barber has his basin, the surgeon a lancet. On one stone we saw a head detached from the body, which was streaming with blood: it was the grave of either a murdered man or else one who had been executed. Alongside it was stretched an Armenian, sound asleep, with his head thrown back.

We passed on next to the Mussulman cemetery. Here were to be seen the same multitude of little columns, either in rows or standing about in irregular groups, some of them painted and gilded on top, those of the women culminating in ornamental bunches of flowers carved in relief, many of them surrounded with shrubs and flowering plants. As we stood looking at one of them, two Turks, leading a child by the hand, passed down the path to a tomb some little distance off, on reaching which they paused, and, having spread out the contents of a package one of them carried under his arm, they seated themselves on the tombstone and began to eat. I stood watching them. When the meal was ended the elder of the two wrapped what appeared to be a fish and a piece of bread in a scrap of paper, and with a gesture of respect placed it in a hole beside the grave. This having been done, they both lit their pipes and fell to smoking tranquilly, while the child ran up and down and played among the trees. It was explained to me later that the fish and bread were that portion of their repast which Turks leave as a sign of affection for relatives probably not long dead; the hole was the small opening made in the ground near the head of every Mussulman grave in order that the departed may hear the sobs and lamentations of their dear ones left on earth, and occasionally receive a few drops of rose-water or enjoy the scent of the flowers. Their mortuary smoke concluded, the two pious Turks arose, and, taking the child once more by the hand, disappeared among the cypress trees.

PANKALDI.

On coming out of the cemetery we found ourselves in another Christian quarter—Pankaldi—traversed by wide streets lined with new buildings and surrounded by gardens, villas, hospitals, and large barracks. This is the suburb of Constantinople farthest away from the sea. After having seen which, we turned back to redescend to the Golden Horn. On reaching the last street, however, we came unexpectedly upon a new and strikingly solemn scene. It was a Greek funeral procession, which advanced slowly toward us between a dense and perfectly silent crowd of people packed together on either side of the street. Heading the procession came a group of Greek priests in their long embroidered garments; then the archimandrite wearing a crown upon his head and a long cape embroidered in gold; behind him were a number of young ecclesiastics clad in brilliant colors, and a group of friends and relatives, all wearing their richest garments, and in their midst the bier, covered with flowers, on which lay the body of a young girl of about fifteen dressed in satin and resplendent with jewels. The face was exposed—such a dear little face, white as snow, the mouth slightly contracted as if in pain, and two long tresses of beautiful black hair lying across the shoulders and breast. The bier passes, the crowd closes in behind the procession, which is quickly lost to sight, and we find ourselves standing, sobered and thoughtful, in the midst of the deserted street.

SAN DMITRI.

We now descended the hill, and, after crossing the dry bed of a torrent and climbing up the ascent on the other side, found ourselves in another suburb, San Dmitri. Here almost the entire population is Greek. On every side may be seen black eyes and fine aquiline noses; patriarchal-looking old men and slight, sinewy young ones; girls with hair hanging down their backs, and bright intelligent-looking lads, who disport themselves in the middle of the street among the chickens and pigs, filling the air with their musical cries and harmonious inflections. We approached a group of these boys who were engaged in pelting one another with pebbles, all chattering at the same time. One of them, about eight years old, the most impish-looking little rascal of the lot, kept tossing his little fez in the air, every few minutes calling out, "*Zito! zito!*" (Hurrah! hurrah!) Suddenly he turned to another little chap seated on a doorstep near by, and cried, "*Checchino! buttami la palla!*" (Checchino! throw me the ball). Seizing him by the arm as though I were a gypsy kidnapper, I said, "So you are an Italian?"—"Oh no, sir," he answered; "I belong to Constantinople."—"Then who taught you to speak Italian?"—"Oh that?" said he; "why, my mother"—"And where is your mother?" Just at that moment, though, a woman carrying a baby in her arms approached, all smiles, and explained to me that she was from Pisa, that she and her husband, an engraver from Leghorn, had been in Constantinople for eight years past, and that the boy was theirs. Had this good woman had a handsome matronly face, a turretted crown upon her head, and a long mantle floating majestically from her shoulders, she could not have brought the image of Italy more forcibly before my eyes and mind. "And how do you like living here?" I asked her. "What do you think of Constantinople on the whole?"—"How can I tell?" said she, smiling artlessly. "It seems to be like a city that—well, to tell you the truth, I can never get it out of my head that it is the last day of the Carnival;" and then, giving free rein to her Tuscan speech, she explained to us that "*the Mussulman's Christ is Mahomet*," that a Turk is allowed to marry four wives, that the Turkish language is admirable for those who understand it, and various other pieces of equally valuable information, but which, told in that language and amid those strange surroundings, gave us more pleasure than the choicest bits of news—so much so, indeed, that on parting we were fain to leave a small monetary expression of our esteem in the hand of the little lad, and exclaimed simultaneously as we walked off, "After all, there is nothing that sets one up so as a mouthful of Italian now and then."

TOTAOLA.

Recrossing the little valley, we came to another Greek quarter, Totaola, where our stomachs gave us a hint that this would be a favorable moment in which to investigate the interior of one of those innumerable restaurants of Constantinople, all of which, built on the same plan, present the same extraordinary appearance. There is one huge room, which might on occasion be turned into a theatre, lighted, as a rule, only by the door through which you enter; around it runs a high wooden gallery furnished with a balustrade. On one side is an enormous stove at which a brigand in shirt-sleeves fries fish, bastes the roast, mixes sauces, and devotes himself generally to the business of shortening human life; at a counter on the other side another forbidding-looking individual serves out red and white wine in glasses with handles; in the middle and front of the apartment are low stools without backs and little tables scarcely higher than the stools, looking for all the world like cobblers' benches. We entered with some slight feeling of hesitation, not knowing whether the groups of Greeks and Armenians of the lower orders already assembled might not evince some disagreeable signs of curiosity; on the contrary, however, no one deigned so much as to look at us. It is my belief that the population of Constantinople is the least inquisitive of any on the face of the globe. You must be the Sultan at least, or else promenade through the streets without any clothes on, like the madman of Pera, for people to show that they are so much as aware of your existence. Taking our seats in a corner, we waited some time, but, as nothing happened, we finally concluded that it must be the custom in Constantinopolitan restaurants for every one to look out for himself. Advancing then boldly to the stove, we each got a portion of the roast—Heaven only knows from what quadruped—and then, providing ourselves with a glass apiece of the resinous Tenedos wine, we returned to our corner, spread the repast out on a table barely reaching to our knees, and, with a sidelong glance at one another, fell to and consumed the sacrifice. After resignedly settling the account we walked out in perfect silence, afraid on our lives to open our lips for fear a bray or a bark should escape them, and resumed our walk in the direction of the Golden Horn, somewhat chastened in spirit.

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Panorama of the Arsenal and Golden Horn.

KASSIM PASHA.

A walk of ten minutes brought us once more into real Turkey, the great Mussulman suburb of Kassim Pasha, a city in itself, filled with mosques and dervishes' monasteries, which, with its kitchen-gardens and shaded grounds, covers an entire hill and valley, and, extending all the way to the Golden Horn, includes all of the ancient bay of Mandsacchio, from the cemetery of Galata quite to the promontory which overlooks the Balata quarter on the other shore. From the heights of Kassim Pasha a most exquisite view is to be had. Beneath, on the water's edge, stands the enormous arsenal of Tersâne; beyond it extends for more than a mile a labyrinth of dry-docks, workshops, open squares, storehouses, and barracks, skirting all that part of the Golden Horn which serves as a port of war. The admiralty building, airy and graceful, seeming to float upon the surface of the water, stands out clearly against the dark-green background of the Galata cemetery; in the harbor innumerable small steamboats and kâiks, crowded with people, shoot in and out among the stationary iron-clads and old frigates of the Crimea; on the opposite bank lie Stambul, the aqueduct of Valens, bearing aloft its mighty arches into the blue heavens above, the great mosques of Muhammad and Suleiman, and innumerable houses and minarets. In order to take in all the details of this scene we seated ourselves in front of a Turkish café and sipped the fourth or fifth of the dozen or more cups of coffee which, whether you wish to or not, you are bound to imbibe in the course of every day of your stay in Constantinople. This café was a very unpretending place, but, like all such establishments—Turkish ones, that is—most original, probably differing but little from those very first ones started in the time of Suleiman the Great, or those others into which the fourth Murad used to burst so unexpectedly, cimenter in hand, when he made his nocturnal rounds for the purpose of wreaking summary vengeance upon venders of the forbidden beverage. What numbers of imperial edicts, theological disputes, and bloody quarrels has this "enemy of sleep and fruitfulness," as it has been termed by ulemas of the strict school, "genius of dreams and quickener of the mind," as the more liberal sects have it, been the cause of!

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And now, after love and tobacco, it is the most highly prized of all luxuries in the estimation of every poor Osman. To-day coffee is drunk on the summits of the Galata and Serasker towers; you find it on the steamboats, in the cemeteries, in the barber-shops, the baths, the bazârs. In whatever part of Constantinople you may happen to be, if you merely call out, "Café-gi!" without taking the trouble to leave your seat, in three minutes a cup is steaming before you.

THE CAFÉ.

Our café was a large whitewashed room, with a wooden wainscoting five or six feet high, and a low divan running around the four walls. In one corner stood a stove at which a Turk with a hooked nose was making coffee in little brass coffee-pots, from which he poured it into tiny cups, adding the sugar himself: this is the universal custom in Constantinople. The coffee is made fresh for every new-comer and handed to him already sweetened, together with a glass of water, which the Turk always drinks before approaching the cup to his lips. At one side hung a small looking-glass, and beside it a rack filled with razors: almost all the cafés in Constantinople are barber-shops as well, the head of the establishment combining these duties with those of leech and dentist, and operating upon his victims in the same apartment as that in which his guests are drinking their coffee. On the opposite wall hung another rack filled with crystal *narghilehs*, their long, flexible tubes wound around like snakes, and terra-cotta pipes with cherry-wood stems. Five Turks were seated on the divan thoughtfully smoking their *narghilehs*, and in front of the door three others sat upon very low straw-bottomed stools, their backs against the wall, side by side, with pipes in their mouths; a youth belonging to the establishment was engaged in shaving the head of a big, fat dervish clad in a camel's-hair tunic. No one looked up as we took our seats, no one spoke, and, with the exception of the coffee-maker and the young man, no one made the slightest movement of any sort. The gurgling sound of the water in the *narghilehs*, something like the purring of cats, was all that broke the profound stillness. Every one gazed fixedly into vacancy, with faces absolutely devoid of all expression, like an assembly of wax figures. How many just such scenes as this have impressed themselves indelibly upon my mind! A wooden house, a cross-legged Turk, broad shafts of light, an exquisite far-away view, profound silence,—there you have Turkey. Every time I hear that word pronounced these objects rise up before me in the same way that one sees a canal and a windmill when any one mentions Holland.

PIALE PASHA.

From there, skirting along the edge of a large Mussulman cemetery which extends from the top of the Kassim Pasha hill to Tersâne, we proceeded again in a northerly direction, and, descending into the valley, reached the little district of Piale Pasha, almost buried in her trees and gardens, and paused before the mosque from which the quarter takes its name. It is white and surmounted by six graceful domes; the courtyard is surrounded by arches supported on airy columns; there is a charming minaret, and surrounding the whole a circle of enormous cypress trees. At that hour all the neighboring houses were tightly closed, the streets empty, and even the courtyard of the mosque itself deserted; the drowsiness and heat of noonday brooded over everything, and, except for the dull buzzing of the insects, not a sound was to be heard. Looking at our watches, we found it wanted just three minutes to twelve o'clock, one of the Mussulman's five canonical hours, at which the *muezzin*, appearing upon the gallery of every minaret, announces to the four quarters of the globe the religious formula of Islam. We were perfectly well aware that in all Constantinople there is not a minaret upon which, punctual as clockwork, the messenger of the Prophet does not appear at his appointed hour; at the same time we could hardly bring ourselves to believe that in that farthest outpost of the immense city, on that solitary, out-of-the-way mosque as well, and amid that profound silence and apparent desertion, the figure would rise up, the message be delivered. Watch in hand, I stood waiting with lively curiosity the stroke of the hour, glancing now at the minute-hand, now at the small doorway opening out on the gallery of the minaret, about as high from the ground as the fourth story of an ordinary house. Presently the minute-hand reaches the sixtieth little black speck: no one appeared. "He is not there," said I.—"There he is," replied Yunk; and, true enough, there he stood. The balustrade of the gallery concealed all his person but the face, of which the distance was too great to distinguish the features clearly. For a few seconds he stood perfectly motionless: then, closing both ears with his fingers and raising his face toward heaven, he chanted slowly, in high, piercing accents, solemnly, mournfully, the sacred words which at the same moment were resounding from every minaret in Africa, Asia, and Europe: "God is great! there is but one God! Mahomet is his Prophet! Come to prayer! come and be saved! God is great! there is none other! Come to prayer!" Then, proceeding a part of the way around the balcony, he repeated the same words toward the north, then to the west, and then to the east, and finally disappeared as he had come. At the same instant we caught the faint far-away tones of a similar voice in the distance, sounding like some one calling for help. Then all was still, and we two were left standing motionless and silent, with a vague feeling of hopelessness, as though those two voices had been addressed solely to us, calling upon us to fall down and pray, and with the disappearance of the vision we had been left alone in that still valley, like beings abandoned by God and man. No tolling or chime of bells has ever appealed to me so strongly, and I then understood for the first time why it was that Mahomet decided in favor of the human voice as a means of summoning the faithful to their devotions, rather than the ancient trumpet of the Israelites or tymbal of the Christians. He hesitated for some time before making up his mind, so that the entire Orient narrowly escaped wearing an aspect totally different from that of the present day. Had he selected the tymbal, which must inevitably have become a bell later on, it is very certain that the minaret would have gone, and with it would have disappeared for ever one of the most charming and distinctive features of both town and country in the East.

OK-MEIDAN.

Mounting the hill to the west of Piale Pasha, we reached a vast open plain from which there is a view of Stambul and the entire length of the Golden Horn from Eyûb to Seraglio Point, four miles of mosque and garden—a scene so overpoweringly beautiful that one is tempted to fall upon his knees as before some heavenly vision. On the Ok-Meidan (Place of Arrows) the sultans used formerly to practise shooting with the bow and arrow, after the custom of the Persian kings. A number of small stone obelisks and pillars scattered about irregularly bear inscriptions each to the effect that upon that spot some imperial arrow has fallen. The beautiful kiosk is still standing from whose tribune the sultan was wont to draw his bow; on the right were drawn up a long line of pashas and beys, living exclamation-points indicative of the admiration excited by their lord's dexterity; to the left stood a group of twelve pages belonging to the imperial family, whose duty it was to run after and pick up the arrows, marking the spots on which they fell; hidden behind the surrounding trees and shrubbery a few venturesome Turks peeped out who had stolen thither to gaze fearfully upon the sublime countenance of the vicar of God; while in the tribune, in the attitude of some haughty athlete, stood the sultan Mahmûd, the mightiest archer of the empire, his flashing eye compelling the bystanders to avert their gaze, and that famous beard, black as the raven's feathers of Mt. Taurus, gleaming afar against the white tunic all spotted with the blood of the Janissaries. All this has now changed and become utterly commonplace. The Sultan practises with a revolver in the courtyard of his palace, while Ok-Meidan is used by the infantry for target-practice. On one side stands a dervish monastery, on the other a solitary café, and the whole place is as melancholy and deserted as a steppe. 112

PIRI PASHA.

Descending from the Ok-Meidan toward the Golden Horn, we came to another little Mussulman quarter called Piri Pasha, possibly after the famous vizier of the time of the first Selim, who educated Suleiman the Magnificent. Piri Pasha faces the Jewish quarter of Balata, situated on the opposite bank of the Golden Horn. We met nothing as we passed through it except a few dogs and occasionally an old Turkish beggar; we did not regret this, however, as it gave us an opportunity to examine its construction at our leisure. It is a very curious fact that on entering any quarter of Constantinople, after having seen it from the water or some adjacent height, you invariably experience precisely the same shock of astonishment as on going behind the scenes of a theatre after having witnessed some beautiful spectacular effect from the stalls. You are filled with amazement to find that the combination of all these mean and ugly objects is what has just produced so charming a whole. I suppose there is no other city in the world whose beauty is so entirely dependent on general effect as Constantinople. Seen from Balata, Piri Pasha is the prettiest little village imaginable, smiling, radiant with color, decked with foliage, its charming image reflected in the Golden Horn like the features of some beautiful nymph, awakening dreams of love and pleasure in the breast. Enter it and the whole thing changes: you find nothing but rude, mean little houses colored like booths at a country fair, filthy courts looking like witches' dens, groups of dusty fig and cypress trees, gardens littered with rubbish, narrow, deserted streets—dirt, misery, wretchedness. But run down the hillside, jump into a kâik, and give half a dozen strokes with the oars, behold! the fairy city has reappeared, beautiful and fascinating as before. 113

HASKEUI.

Continuing along the shore of the Golden Horn, we descended into another suburb, vast, populous, wearing an entirely different aspect from the last, and where we saw quite plainly, after taking half a dozen steps, that we were no longer among Mussulmans. On all sides dirty children covered with sores were rolling about on the ground; bent, ragged old crones sat working with their skinny fingers in the doorways, through which glimpses could be caught of dusky interiors cluttered up with heaps of old iron and rags; men clad in long, dirty cloaks, with tattered handkerchiefs wound around their heads, skulked along close to the wall, glancing furtively about them; thin, meagre faces peered out of the windows as we went by; old clothes dangled from cords suspended between the houses; mud and litter everywhere. It was Haskeui, the Jewish quarter, the Ghetto of the northern shore of the Golden Horn, facing that on the other shore, with which, at the time of the Crimean War, it was connected by a wooden bridge, all traces of which have since disappeared. From here stretches another long chain of arsenals, military schools, barracks, and drill-grounds, extending nearly all the way to the end of the Golden Horn. But of these we saw nothing, our heads and our legs having given out equally. Of all that we had seen, there only remained a confused jumble of places and people; it seemed as though we had been travelling for a week, and we thought of far-away Pera with a slight sensation of home-sickness. At this point we should certainly have turned back had not our solemn compact made upon the bridge come into our minds, and Yunk, according to his helpful custom, revived my drooping spirits by chanting the grand march from *Aida*. 114

KALIJI OGHLU.

Forward, then! Traversing another Turkish cemetery and climbing still another hill, we found ourselves in the suburb of Kaliji Oghlu, inhabited by a mixed population. In this little city, at every street-corner, you come upon a new race or a new religion. You mount, descend, climb up, pass among tombs and mosques, churches and synagogues. You skirt gardens and cemeteries, encounter handsome Armenian women with fine matronly figures, slender Turkish ones who steal a look at you through their veils; all around you hear Greek, Armenian, Spanish—the Spanish of the Jews—and you walk on and on and on. "After all, you know," we say to one another, "Constantinople must end somewhere." Everything on earth has an end. We have been told so ever since we 115

were children. On and on and on, and now the houses of Kaliji Oghlu grow fewer, woods begin to appear; there is but one more group of dwellings. Quickening our pace, we passed them by, and at last reached—

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SUDLUDJI.

Merciful Heavens! what did we reach? Nothing in the world but another suburb, the Christian settlement of Sudludji, built on a hill surrounded by woods and cemeteries, the same hill at whose base was formerly one end of the only bridge which in ancient times connected the two banks of the Golden Horn. But this suburb, by a merciful providence, was actually the last, and our excursion had finally come to an end. Quitting the houses, we cast about us for some spot where we might seek a little much-needed repose. Back of the village there rises a bare, steep ascent, up which dragging our weary limbs, we found before us the largest Jewish cemetery in Constantinople. It is a vast open space, filled with innumerable flat gravestones, presenting the desolate appearance of a city destroyed by an earthquake, and unrelieved by a tree or flower or blade of grass, or even so much as a footpath—a desert solitude as depressing to look upon as the scene of some great disaster. Seating ourselves upon one of the tombs, we turned in the direction of the Golden Horn, and while resting our tired bodies feasted our eyes upon the superb panorama which lay spread out before us. At our feet lay Sudludji, Kaliji Oghlu, Haskeui, Piri Pasha, a chain of picturesque villages set in the midst of green gardens and cemeteries and blue water; to the left, the solitary Ok-Meidan and the hundred minarets of Kassim Pasha, and farther on the huge, indistinct outlines of Stambul; beyond, fading away into the distant sky, the blue line of the mountains of Asia; directly facing us on the opposite shore of the Golden Horn lay the mysterious quarter of Eyûb, whose gorgeous mausoleums, marble mosques, deserted streets, and shady inclines, dotted with tombstones, could be clearly distinguished from where we sat, rural-looking solitudes full of a melancholy charm; to the right of Eyûb lay still other villages covering the hillsides and peeping at their own reflections in the water; and then the final bend of the Golden Horn, lost to view between two lofty banks covered with trees and flowers.

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Half asleep, exhausted in mind and body, we sat there, allowing our eyes to wander at will over the whole exquisite scene; put all we had done and seen to music, and chanted antiphonally a rigmarole of I don't know what nonsense; discussed the history of the dead man upon whose tomb we were sitting; poked into an ant-hill with bits of straw; talked of all manner of foolish and irrelevant things; asked ourselves from time to time if it were really true that we were in Constantinople; reflected upon the shortness of life and vanity of all human desires, at the same time drawing in deep breaths of pleasure and delight; but away down in the bottom of our secret souls we each realized through it all that nothing on earth, no matter how charming and beautiful it may be, can quite satisfy a man, provided he does not while enjoying it feel in his the hand of the woman he loves.

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IN A KÄIK.

Toward sunset we descended to the Golden Horn, and, taking our places in a four-oared käik, had scarcely pronounced the word "Galata!" before the graceful little boat was already in mid-stream. Of all varieties of boats which skim over the surface of the water, there is certainly none so delightful as the käik. Longer than the gondola, but narrower and lighter, carved, painted, and gilded, it is without seats or rudder; you sit in the bottom upon a cushion or bit of carpet, only your head and shoulders visible above the sides; both ends are shaped alike, so that it can be propelled in either direction, and it is easily upset by any sudden movement. Shooting out from the shore like an arrow from the bow, it seems to fly like a swallow, barely touching the water; overtakes and passes all other craft, and disappears in the distance, its bright and varied colors reflected in the waves like a dolphin flying from its pursuer. Our oarsmen were a couple of good-looking young Turks dressed in white trousers, light blue shirts, and red fezzes, with bare arms and legs—a pair of lusty athletes of twenty or so, bronzed, clean, cheerful, and frank. At each stroke the boat bounds forward its whole length. Other käiks fly by, hardly seen before they are lost sight of; we pass flocks of ducks; large covered barges filled with veiled women; clouds of birds circle over our heads; from time to time the tall sea-grass shuts out everything from view.

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Seen thus from the other end of the Golden Horn and at that hour, the city presents an entirely new aspect. The Asiatic coast, owing to the bend of the shore, is entirely hidden, Seraglio Point shutting in the Golden Horn as though it were a great lake. The hills on either bank seem to have grown larger, and Stambul, far, far away, is a blending of delicate blues and grays, huge and indistinct. Like an enchanted city, it seems to float upon the water and lose itself among the clouds. The käik flies on; the two banks recede, inlet after inlet, grove after grove, suburb after suburb; our surroundings widen out. The colors of the city grow dim, the horizon seems to be on fire, the water is full of purple and gold reflections; on and on, until at last a profound lethargy steals over us, a sense of boundless content, in which we remain silent and happy, until finally the boatman is obliged to call in our ears, "*Monsù! arrivar!*" before we can arouse ourselves sufficiently to know where we are.

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THE GREAT BAZÂR.

After giving a superficial glance over all of Constantinople, including both banks of the Golden Horn, it seemed now time to penetrate into the heart of Stambul, to explore that world-embracing, perpetual fair, that hidden city, dim, mysterious, crammed with associations, wonders, and treasures, which, extending from the Nûri Osmaniye to the Serasker hill, is called The Great Bazâr. 123

We will start from the square in front of the Validêh Sultan mosque. Here the epicurean reader may like possibly to pause long enough to inspect the Baluk Bazâr, that fish-market famous ever since the days of thrifty old Andronicus Palæologus, who, we are told, met the entire culinary expenses of his court with the profits made from fish caught only along the walls of the city, where, indeed, they are still most plentiful, and, seen on one of its principal days, the Baluk Bazâr would afford as succulent and tempting a subject for the author of the *Ventre de Paris* as one of those well-covered tables one sees in old Dutch pictures. The venders, almost without exception Turks, are drawn up all around the square behind their fish, which are spread out on mats stretched upon the ground or else on long tables, around which a crowd of customers and an army of dogs fight for precedence. Here may be found the delicious mullet of the Bosphorus, four times the size it attains to in our waters; oysters from the island of Marmora, which the Greeks and Armenians alone understand how to cook properly, broiling them on the live coals; sprats and tunnies, the salting of which is an industry confined almost entirely to the Jews; anchovies, which the Turks have learned how to put up in the Marseillaise fashion; sardines, with which Constantinople provides the entire Archipelago; the *loufer*, that most delicious of all the Bosphorus fish, which is caught by moonlight; mackerel from the Black Sea, which make seven invasions successively into the waters of the city, accompanied by a noise so loud that it can be heard in the towns on both shores; the colossal *isdaurid*; enormous sword-fish; turbot, or, as they are called by the Turks, *kalkau-baluk*; shellfish, and a thousand and one other varieties of the smaller kinds of fish which dart and frisk about from one to the other of the two seas, chased by dolphins and *falianos*, and preyed upon by innumerable kingfishers, from whose very mouths the booty is often snatched by the *piombini*. 124

Cooks from great houses, old Mussulman bons-vivants, slaves, and young employés from the various restaurants surround the tables, examine the fish with a meditative air, bargain in monosyllables, and walk off, each carrying his purchase suspended by a bit of twine, grave, taciturn, self-contained as though it were the head of an enemy. By mid-day the square is deserted and the venders have repaired to the various cafés in the neighborhood, where they will sit with their backs against the wall and the mouthpiece of a narghileh between their lips, in a sort of waking sleep, until sunset. 125

To reach the Great Bazâr we take a street opening out of the fish-market, so narrow that the projecting parts of the opposite houses almost touch one another; on either side are rows of low, ill-lighted tobacconist shops, that "fourth support of the tent of voluptuousness," coming after coffee, opium, and wine, or "the fourth of pleasure's couches," as it is sometimes called. Like coffee, tobacco has been blasted by imperial edicts and denounced by the *mufti*, with the usual result of adding fresh zest to its use and making it a fruitful source of tumult and punishment; and now this entire street is devoted to traffic in it alone. The tobacco is displayed upon long shelves in pyramids and round piles, each one surmounted by a lemon. All kinds are to be found here: *latakia* from Antioch; Seraglio tobacco as fine and smooth as spun silk; tobacco for pipe and cigarette of every grade of strength and flavor, from that smoked by the gigantic porter of Galata to that used by the indolent *odalisques* of the Seraglio to put them to sleep. There is the *tombeki*, so powerful that it would set the head of even a veteran smoker spinning did its fumes not reach his mouth first purified by the water of the narghileh, and which is kept in glass jars like a drug. The tobacconists are all Greeks or Armenians, with ceremonious manners, somewhat inclined to give themselves airs. The customers assemble before the shops in groups. Many of them are employés of the various foreign ambassadors or of the Seraskerat, and occasionally one sees some personage of importance. It is a great place for gossip of all kinds; politics are discussed; the doings of the great world talked over; and merely to walk through this little, retired, aristocratic bazâr leaves a strong impression upon one's mind of the joys to be obtained from conversation *and* tobacco. 126

We now pass beneath an old arched doorway festooned with vines, and come out opposite a large stone edifice, from which opens a long, straight, covered street lined with dimly-lighted shops and filled with people, packing-boxes, and heaps of merchandise. Entering this, we are immediately assailed by an odor so powerful as to fairly knock one down: this is the Egyptian Bazâr, where are deposited all the wares of India, Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, which later on, converted into essences, pastilles, powders, and ointments, serve to color little hands and faces, perfume apartments and baths and breaths and beards, reinvigorate worn-out pashas, dull the senses of unhappy married people, stupefy smokers, and spread dreams, oblivion, and insensibility throughout the whole of the vast city. After going but a short distance in this bazâr your head begins to feel dull and heavy, and you get out of it as fast as you can; but the effect of that hot, close atmosphere and those penetrating odors clings long to your clothing, and remains for all time in your memory as one of the most vivid and characteristic impressions of the East. 127

After escaping from the Egyptian Bazâr you pass among a crowd of noisy coppersmiths' shops, Turkish restaurants, from which issue endless nauseous smells, and all manner of wretched booths, shops, and stands, dark little dens containing trash of all sorts, and finally come to the Great Bazâr itself, not, however, before you have been obliged to defend yourself from a vigorous attack.

About a hundred feet from the main entrance there lie in ambush like so many cutthroats the agents or middlemen of the merchants and the agents of the agents. These fellows are so well up in their business that at a single glance they learn not only that this is your first visit to the bazâr, but usually make so clever a guess as to your nationality that they rarely make a mistake in the language which they first address you in.

Approaching, fez in hand, they proceed, with an engaging smile, to offer their services. 128

There usually then follows a conversation something like this: the traveller, declining the proffered service, remarks,

"I do not propose to make any purchases."

"Oh, sir, what difference does that make? I only want to show you the bazâr."

"I don't care to see the bazâr."

"But I will escort you gratis."

"I don't wish to be escorted gratis."

"Very well; then I will just go to the end of the street with you, merely to give you certain points, which you will find very useful some other day when you come to buy."

"But suppose I don't want to even hear you talk about buying?"

"Very well, then, let us talk about something else. How long have you been in Constantinople? Is your hotel comfortable? Have you gotten permits to visit the mosques?"

"But when I tell you that I don't want to talk about anything—that I wish, in short, to be alone—"

"All right; then I will leave you alone, and follow a dozen steps behind you."

"But why should you follow me at all?"

"Merely to prevent you from being cheated in the shops."

"But I tell you I am not going into the shops."

"Well, then, to save you from annoyance on the street."

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And so you must finally either pause to take breath and collect your ideas, or else yield and allow him to accompany you.

There is nothing about the exterior of the Great Bazâr to either attract the eye or give the faintest idea of what it is within. It is an immense stone edifice in the Byzantine style, irregular in form and surrounded by high gray walls, lighted by means of hundreds of small lead-covered domes in the roof. The principal entrance is through a high, vaulted doorway of no architectural pretensions. Outside, in the neighboring streets, no sounds can be heard of what is going on within, and half a dozen steps away from the entrance one might easily believe that only silence and solitude reigned within those prison-like walls; once inside, however, this delusion is quickly dispelled. You find yourself not in a building at all, but in a labyrinth of streets with vaulted roofs, lined with columns and carved pilasters—a veritable city, with mosques and fountains, thoroughfares and open squares, pervaded with the dim, subdued light of the forest, where no ray or gleam of sunshine ever penetrates, and thronged with immense crowds of people. Every street is a bazâr, generally leading out of the principal thoroughfare—a street covered by a roof composed of white and black stone arches and decorated with arabesques like the nave of a mosque. Processions of horses, camels, and carriages pass up and down the dimly-lighted streets, in the midst of the throng of foot-passengers, with a deafening, reverberating noise. On all sides attempts are being made by word and gesture to attract your attention. The Greek merchant hails you with loud, imperious voice, while his Armenian rival, by far the greater knave of the two, assumes a modest, retiring manner, addressing you in soft, obsequious tones; the Jew murmurs gently in your ear; while the Turk, silent and reserved as ever, squats on a cushion in his doorway and contents himself with addressing you solely with his eye, leaving the results to Fate. Ten voices appeal to you at once: "Monsieur! captain! caballero! signore! eccellenza! kyrie! milor!" Down every cross-street you catch glimpses of new vistas, long lines of columns and pilasters, corridors, other streets opening out of these again, arcades and galleries, confused far-off views of new bazârs, shops, merchandise suspended on the walls and from the roofs, bustling merchants, heavily-laden porters, figures of veiled women, noisy groups, which constantly form, dissolve, and form again—a mingling of sights, sounds, colors, and movement to set one's head in a whirl. The confusion, however, is only apparent: in reality, this enormous mart is arranged with as much system and order as a barracks, and it takes but a few hours for one to become sufficiently at home in it to find his way to any object without difficulty or the help of a dragoman. Every separate kind of merchandise has its own especial quarter, its little street, corridor, and square; there are a hundred small bazârs opening one into another like the rooms in some vast suite of apartments, and each bazâr is at the same time a museum, a promenade, a market, and a theatre, in which you can look at all without buying anything, can drink your cup of coffee, enjoy the open air, chat in a dozen different languages, and make eyes at the prettiest girls to be found in the East.

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Date Seller.

Dropping at random into any one of these bazârs, half a day goes by without your so much as knowing it: take, for instance, the bazâr of stuffs and costumes. Here are displayed such a dazzling array of beautiful and rare objects that you at once lose your head, to say nothing of your purse, and the chances are that, should you in any unguarded moment be tempted to satisfy some small caprice, you will end by having to telegraph home for assistance. You pass between pyramids and heaps of Bagdad brocades; rugs from Caramania; Brusa silks; India linens; muslins from Bengal; shawls from Madras; Indian and Persian cashmeres: the variegated fabrics of Cairo; gold-embroidered cushions; silken veils striped with silver; striped blue and red gauze scarfs, so light and transparent as to look like clouds; stuffs of every variety of color and design, in which blue and green, crimson and yellow, all the colors which disagree most violently, are combined and blended together in a harmony so perfect and exquisite that you can only gaze in open-mouthed admiration; table-covers of all sizes upon whose background of red or white cloth are outlined intricate silken designs of flowers, verses from the Koran, and imperial monograms, which it would take a day to examine, like a wall in the Alhambra. Here one has as good an opportunity to see and admire, one by one, each of the various articles which go to make up the costume of a Turkish lady as though it were the alcove of a harem, from the green or orange or purple mantles which are thrown over everything in public down to the silken chemise, gold-embroidered kerchief, and even the satin girdle upon which no eye of man other than that of the husband or eunuch is ever allowed to fall. Here may be seen red-velvet caftans edged with ermine and covered with stars; yellow satin bodices; trousers of rose-colored silk; white damask undervests thickly covered with gold flowers; wedding veils sparkling with silver spangles; little greencloth jackets edged with swan's down; Greek, Armenian, Circassian costumes of a thousand fantastic shapes, so thickly covered with ornamentation as to be as hard and glittering as breastplates; and mixed in with all this magnificence the sombre, commonplace, serviceable stuffs of England and France, producing much the same effect upon the mind as would the sight of a tailor's bill introduced into the pages of a volume of poems. If there is a woman anywhere in the world whom you care for, you cannot walk through this bazâr without longing to be a millionaire or else feeling the passion for plunder blaze up within you, if only for a moment.

To free yourself from these unhallowed desires you have but turn a little to one side and you find yourself in the pipe-bazâr, where the soul is gently conducted back to more tranquil pastures. Here you come upon collections of cherry, maple, rosewood, and jessamine pipes, and of yellow amber mouth-pieces from the Baltic Sea, polished until they shine like crystal, and of every grade of color and transparency, some of them set with diamonds or rubies; pipes from Cæsarea, their stems wrapped with silk and gold thread; tobacco-pouches from Lybia decorated with many-colored lozenges and gorgeous embroidery; silver, steel, and Bohemian glass narghilehs of exquisite antique shapes, engraved and chased and studded with precious stones, their morocco tubes glittering with rings and gilding, all wrapped in raw cotton and under the constant surveillance of two glittering eyes whose gaze never wavers; but let any one short of a vizier or a pasha who has spent years in bleeding some province of Asia Minor approach, and the pupils dilate in such a manner as to cause the modest inquiry as to the price to die away upon one's lips. Here the purchaser must be some envoy of the sultana anxious to present a slight token of her appreciation to the pliable grand vizier; or a high court dignitary, who on assuming the cares of his new office is obliged, in order to maintain his dignity, to expend the sum of fifty thousand francs upon a rack of pipes; or a newly-appointed foreign ambassador who on departing for some European court wishes to take to its royal master a magnificent memento of Stambul. The Turk of modest

means gazes mournfully upon these treasures and passes by on the other side, paraphrasing for his consolation that saying of the Prophet, "The flames of the infernal regions shall rage like the bellowing of the camel in the stomach of him who shall *smoke a pipe* of gold or silver."

Passing from here into the perfumery bazâr, we once more find ourselves beset with temptations. It is one of the most distinctively Oriental in character of all the bazârs, and its wares were very dear to the heart of the Prophet, who classes together women, children, and perfumes as the three things which gave him the greatest pleasure. Here are to be had those famous Seraglio pastilles designed to perfume kisses; packages of the scented gum prepared by the hardy daughters of Chio to be used in strengthening the gums of delicate Mussulman women; exquisite essence of jessamine and of bergamont and powerful attar of roses, enclosed in red-velvet, gold-embroidered cases, and sold at prices that make one's hair stand on end; here can be bought ointment for the eyebrows, antimony for the eyes, henne for the nails, soap to soften the Syrian beauty's skin, and pills to prevent hair from growing on the face of the too masculine Circassian; cedar and orange-water, scent-bags of musk, sandal oil, ambergris, aloes to perfume cups and pipes—a myriad of different powders, pomatums, and waters with fanciful names and destined to uses undreamed of in the prosaic West, each one representing in itself some amorous fancy or seductive caprice, the very refinement of voluptuousness, and exhaling, all together, an odor at once penetrating and sensual, and dreamily suggestive of great languid eyes, soft caressing hands, and the subdued murmur of sighs and embraces.

These fancies are quickly dispelled on turning into the jewelry bazâr, a narrow, dark, deserted street, flanked by wretched-looking little shops, the last places on earth where one would expect to find the fabulous treasures which, as a matter of fact, they do contain. The jewels are kept in oaken coffers, hooped and bound with iron, which stand in the front of the shops under the ever-watchful gaze of the merchant, some old Turk or Hebrew with long beard, and piercing eyes which seem to penetrate into the very recesses of your pocket and examine the contents of your purse; occasionally one or another of them, standing erect before his door, as you pass close by first regards you fixedly in the eye, and then with a rapid movement flashes before your face a diamond of Golconda, a sapphire from Ormus, or a ruby of Gramschid, which at the slightest negative movement on your part is as quickly withdrawn from sight. Others, circulating slowly about, stop you in the middle of the street, and, after casting a suspicious glance all around, draw forth from their bosoms a dirty bit of rag in whose folds is hidden a fine Brazilian topaz or Macedonian turquoise, watching like some tempting demon to see its effect upon you. Others, again, after scrutinizing you closely, come to the conclusion that you have not the precious-stones look, as it were, and do not trouble themselves to offer you anything, and you may wear the face of a saint or the airs of a Crœsus, and it will not avail to open those oaken boxes. The opal necklaces, emerald stars and pendants, the coronets and crescents of pearls of Ophir, the dazzling heaps of beryls, agates, garnets, of crystals, aventurine, and lapis lazuli remain inexorably hidden from the eyes of the curious, provided he has no money, or, at all events, from those of a poor devil of an Italian writer. The utmost such an one can accomplish is to ask the price of a coral or sandal-wood or amber *tespi* which he runs through his fingers, as the Turk does, to pass away the time in the intervals of his forced labors.

If you want to be really amused, though, just go into the Frankish shops, those which deal in everything, and where there are goods to suit all pockets. Hardly has your foot crossed the threshold before a crowd of people spring up from you don't know where, and in an instant you are surrounded. It is out of the question to transact your business with one single person. What between the merchant himself, his partners, his agents, and the various hangers-on of the establishment, you never have to do with less than a half dozen at least. If you escape being flooded by one, you are, so to speak, strung up by another. There is no way by which final defeat can be warded off. Words fail to describe their patience, art, and persistency, the diabolical subterfuges to which they resort in order to force you to buy what they choose. Finding everything put at an exorbitant price, you offer a third, upon which they drop their arms in sign of profound discouragement or beat their foreheads in dumb despair, or else they burst into an impassioned torrent of appeal and expostulation calculated to touch your feelings as a man and a brother. You are hard and cruel; you are evidently determined to force them to close their shops; your object is to reduce them to misery and want; you have no compassion for their innocent children; they wonder plaintively what injury they could ever have done you that you should be so bent upon their ruin. While you are being told the price of an article an agent from a neighboring shop hisses in your ear, "Don't buy it; you are being cheated." Taking this for a piece of honest advice, you soon discover that there is an understanding between him and the shopkeeper; the information that you are being imposed upon in the matter of a shawl is only given in order to fleece you far worse in the purchase of a hanging. While you are examining the various articles they talk in broken sentences among themselves, gesticulating, striking their breasts, casting looks full of dark meaning. If you understand Greek, the conversation is in Turkish; if you are familiar with that, it is in Armenian; if you show any knowledge of Armenian, they employ Spanish; but whatever language is adopted, they know enough of it to cheat you. If after some time you still preserve an unbroken front, they begin stroking you down—tell you how beautifully you talk their tongue; that you have all the air and manner of a real gentleman; that they will never be able to forget your attractive face. They talk of the land of your birth, where they have passed so many happy years. They have, in fact, been everywhere. Then they make you a cup of fresh coffee and offer to accompany you to the custom-house when you leave in order to interpose between you and the overbearing authorities; which means, being interpreted, in order to secure a final opportunity for cheating you and your fellow-travellers, in case you may have any. They turn their whole shop upside down for you, and should you finally leave without having bought anything, you get no black looks, as they have a sustaining conviction that the harvest is only deferred; if not to-day, then some other day: you are certain to return to the bazâr, when their bloodhounds will scent you out, and should you escape falling into their clutches, you will undoubtedly be caught in the toils of one of their associates; if they do not fleece you as shopkeepers, they will flay you as agents; if they fail to overreach you in the bazâr, they will get the better of you at the custom-house. Of what nationality are these men? No one knows: by dint of having a smattering of so many different languages they have lost their original accent, and the constant habit of acting a part has ended by altering the natural lines of their faces to such a degree as to efface their national traits. They belong to any race you choose, and their profession is whatever you may have need of at the moment—shopkeeper, guide, interpreter, money-lender, and, above all, past master in the art of gulling the universe.

The Mussulman shopkeepers present an altogether different field of observation. Among them may still be found examples of those venerable Turks, rarely enough to be seen now-a-days in the streets of Constantinople, who look like living representatives of the days of the Muhammads and Bayezids, remnants left intact of that mighty Ottoman edifice whose walls received their first rude shock in the reforms of Mahmûd, and which since then, year by year, stone by stone, have been crumbling into ruins. One must now go to the Great Bazâr and search in the dimmest shops of the most obscure streets to behold those enormous turbans of the time of Suleiman, shaped like the dome of a mosque, and beneath them the impressive face, the expressionless eye, hooked nose, long white beard, antique purple or orange caftan, full, plaited trousers confined about the waist by a huge sash, and the haughty and melancholy bearing of a once all-powerful people. With expressions dulled by opium or lighted up with the fire of fanaticism, they sit all day in the backs of their dens with crossed legs and folded arms, calm and unmoved like idols, awaiting with closed lips the predestined purchaser. If business is brisk, they murmur, "*Mach Allah!*" (God be praised!); if dull, "*Ol-sun!*" (So be it!), and bow their heads resignedly. Some employ their time in reading the Koran; others run the beads of the *tespi* through their fingers, murmuring under their breath the hundred epithets of Allah; others, whose affairs have prospered, *drink their narghilehs*, as the Turks express it, slowly revolving around them their sleepy, voluptuous-looking eyes; others sit with drooping lids and bent brow in an attitude of profound meditation. Of what are they thinking? Possibly of their sons killed beneath the walls of Sebastopol, of their far-off caravans, of the lost pleasures of youth, or possibly of the eternal gardens promised by the Prophet, where, in the shade of the palm and the pomegranate, they will espouse those dark-eyed brides never yet profaned by mortal or geni. There is about each individual one of them something striking and original, and all are picturesque. The shop forms a framework for a picture full of color and suggestion; one's mind is instantly filled with images taken from history or what is known of the domestic life of this strange people. This spare, bronzed man with a bold, alert expression is an Arab; he has led his train of camels laden with gems and alabaster from the interior of his far-off country, and more than once has felt the balls of the robbers of the desert whiz past him. This one in the yellow turban, bearing himself with an air of command, has crossed the solitudes of Syria on horseback, carrying with him treasures of silk from Tyre and Sidon. Yonder negro, with his head enveloped in an old Persian shawl, is from Nubia; his forehead is covered with scars made by magicians to preserve him from death, and he holds his head aloft as though still beholding before him the Colossus of Thebes or summits of the Pyramids. This good-looking Moor, with his black eyes and pallid skin, wrapped in a long snow-white cloak, has carried his *caic* and his carpets from the uttermost western limits of the Atlas chain. That green-turbaned Turk, with the emaciated face, has this very year returned from the great pilgrimage. After seeing relatives and companions die of thirst amid the interminable plains of Asia Minor, he finally reached Mecca in the last stages of exhaustion, and, after dragging himself seven times around the *Kaaba*, finally fell half swooning upon the Black Stone, covering it with impassioned kisses. This giant with a pale face, arched brows, and piercing eyes, who has far more the air of a warrior than of a merchant, his entire bearing breathing nothing but pride and arrogance, has brought his furs hither from the northern regions of the Caucasus, and in his day struck at a blow the head from off the shoulders of more than one Cossack. And this poor wool-merchant, with his flat face and small oblique eyes, active and sinewy as an athlete, it is not so long since he was saying his prayers in the shadow of that immense dome which rises above the sepulchre of Tamerlane. Starting from Samarcand, he crossed the desert of Great Bûkharia, and, passing safely through the midst of the Turkoman hordes, crossed the Dead Sea, escaped the balls of the Circassians, and, after returning thanks to Allah in the mosques of Trebizond, has at last come to seek his fortune in Stambul, from whence, as he grows old, he will surely return once more to his beloved Tartary, which always claims the first place in his heart.

The shoe bazâr is one of the most resplendent of all, and possibly fills the brain more than any other with wild longings and riotous desires. It consists of two glittering rows of shops, which make the street in which it is situated look like a suite of royal apartments or like one of those gardens in the Arabian fairy-stories where the fruit trees are laden with pearls and have golden leaves. There are shoes enough there to supply the feet of every court in Europe and Asia. The walls are completely covered with slippers of the sauciest shapes and most striking and fanciful colors, made out of skins, velvet, brocade, and satin, ornamented with filigree-work, gold, tinsel, pearls, silken tassels, swan's down; flowered and starred in gold and silver; so thickly covered with intricate embroidery as to completely hide the original texture; and glittering with emeralds and sapphires. You can buy shoes there for the boatman's bride or for the Seraglio belle; you may pay five francs a pair or a thousand. There are morocco shoes destined to walk the paved streets of Pera, and beside them Turkish slippers which will one day glide over the thick carpets of some pasha's harem; light wooden shoes which will resound on the marbles of the imperial baths; tiny slippers of white satin on which ardent lovers' kisses will be showered; and it may well be that yonder pair encrusted with pearls will some day stand beside the couch of the Padishâh himself, awaiting the pretty feet of some beautiful Georgian. But how, you ask yourself, is it possible for any feet to get into such tiny little receptacles? Some of them seem intended to fit the houris and fairies—long as the leaf of a lily, wide as the leaf of a rose, of such dimensions as to throw all Andalusia into despair; graceful as a dream—not slippers at all, but jewels, toys, objects to stand on one's table full of bonbons or to keep billets-doux in. Once allow your imagination to dwell upon the foot which could wear them, and you are seized with an insane desire to behold it yourself, to stroke and caress it like some pretty plaything. This bazâr is one of those most frequented by strangers: it is not unusual to encounter young Europeans wandering about with slips of paper in their hands upon which are inscribed the measurements of some small French or Italian foot, of which they are possibly quite proud, and it is amusing to see their faces fall and the look of incredulous astonishment which follows the discovery that some slipper which has attracted their fancy is far too small; while others, having asked the price of a pair they had thought of buying, receive so overwhelming a reply that they make off without a word. Here, too, may sometimes be seen Mussulman ladies (*hanum*) with long white veils, and one can often catch, in passing, fragments of their lengthy dialogues with the shopkeepers, brief sentences of that beautiful language, uttered in sweet, clear tones, which fall upon the ear like the notes of a mandolin: "*Buni catscia verersin!*" (How much is this?) "*Pahalli dir!*" (It is too high). "*Ziade veremem!*" (I won't pay any more). And then a childish, ringing laugh, which makes you feel like patting them on the head or pinching their cheeks.

But the richest and most picturesque of all is the armory bazâr. It is more like a museum, really, than a

bazâr, overflowing with treasures and filled with objects which at once transport the imagination into the realms of history and legend. Every sort and shape of weapon is there, fantastic, horrible, cruel-looking, which has ever been brandished in defence of Islamism from Mecca to the Danube, polished and set out in warlike array, as though but now laid down by the fanatical soldiery of Muhammad and Selim. You seem to see the glittering eyes of those formidable sultans, those savage Janissaries, those *spahis* and *azabs*, drunk with blood, amid the gleaming blades—those *silidars*, to whom pity and fear were alike unknown, and who strewed Europe and Asia Minor with severed heads and stiffened corpses. Here are displayed those renowned cimeters capable of cutting through a floating feather or striking off the ears of audacious ambassadors; those heavy Turkish daggers which cleaved downward at a blow from the skull to the very heart; mighty clubs which crashed through Servian and Hungarian helmets; *yataghans*, their handles inlaid with ivory and encrusted with amethysts and rubies, and on their blades the engraved record of the number of heads they have cut off; poniards with silver, velvet, or satin sheaths and agate or ivory handles set with coral, turquoise, and garnets, inscribed in golden lettering with verses from the Koran, their blades curved backward as though feeling for a heart. Who can tell whether amid all this strange and terrible array there may not be the cimeter of Orcano or the sabre with which the powerful arm of the warrior-dervish Abd-el-Murad struck off the heads of his enemies at a single blow; or that famous yataghan with which Sultan Moussa clove asunder the body of Hassan from shoulder to heart; or the huge cimeter of the Bulgarian giant who set the first ladder in place against the walls of Constantinople; or the club with which Muhammad II. felled his rapacious soldiers beneath the roof of St. Sophia; or the mighty Damascus sabre with which Scanderbeg cut down Firuzi Pasha beneath the walls of Stetigrad? All the most horrible massacres and blood-curdling murders of Ottoman history, revolts of the Janissaries, and black deeds of treachery come crowding into one's mind at the mere sight of these terrific weapons, and one fancies that bloodstains can be detected upon the gleaming blades, and that those old Turks lurking in the dim recesses of their shops have gathered them from the field of battle—yes, and the bodies of their owners as well—and that even now their shattered skeletons are occupying some obscure corner close at hand. In among the arms are great blue and scarlet velvet saddles, worked with gold stars and crescents and embroidered in pearls, with plumed frontals and chased silver bits; saddle-cloths magnificent as royal mantles; trappings which remind one of the *Thousand and One Nights*, seemingly intended for the use of a king of the genii making his triumphal entry into a golden city in the land of dreams. Suspended on the walls above all these treasures are antique firelock muskets, clumsy Albanian pistols, long Arabian guns worked and chased like pieces of jewelry; ancient shields made out of bark, tortoise-shell, or hippopotamus skin; Circassian armor, Cossack shields, Mongolian head-pieces, Turkish bows, executioners' axes, great blades of uncouth shape and full of horrible suggestions, each one of which seems to bear witness to a crime committed, and brings before one frightful visions of death-agonies.

Seated cross-legged in the midst of all these objects of magnificence and horror are the merchants who, of all those to be found in the Great Bazâr, present the most striking and distinctive examples of the true Mussulman. They are, for the most part, old, of forbidding aspect, lean as anchorites, haughty as sultans, belonging apparently to another age and wearing the dress of a bygone era: it would seem as though they had arisen from the dead for the purpose of recalling their degenerate descendants to the forgotten austerities of their ancient race.

Another spot well worth seeing is the old-clothes bazâr. Rembrandt would simply have taken up his abode here, and Goya have expended his last *peseta*. Any one who has never been in an Oriental second-hand shop can form no idea of the variety and richness of the rags, pomp of color, and irony of contrast to be found in them—a sight at once fantastic, melancholy, and repellent. They are a sort of rag-sewer, in which the refuse of harem, barrack, court, and theatre await together the moment when some artist's caprice or beggar's necessity shall once more call them forth into the light of day. From long poles fastened to the walls depend antique Turkish uniforms, swallow-tailed coats, fine gentlemen's cloaks, dervishes' tunics, Bedouins' mantles, all greasy, torn, and faded, looking as though they had been taken by force from their former owners, and strongly resembling the booty found on footpads and assassins which may be seen on exhibition in the Court of Assizes. In among all these rags and tatters one catches the glitter of an occasional bit of gold embroidery; old silk scarfs and turbans, all unwrapped, dangle to and fro; a rich shawl with ragged edges; a velvet corsage looking as though some rude hand had torn off its trimming of pearls and fur; slippers and veils which may once have belonged to some beautiful sinner, whose body, sewn up in a bag, now sleeps quietly enough beneath the rippling waters of the Bosphorus;—these and countless other feminine garments and adornments, of all manner of charming shapes and colors, hang imprisoned between rough Circassian caftans, long black Jewish capes, rusty cartridge-boxes, heavy cloaks and coarse tunics beneath whose folds who knows how often the bandit's musket or dagger of the assassin may have been hidden? On toward evening, when the subdued light from the roof above becomes still more uncertain, all these garments, as they sway back and forth in the wind, assume the look and air of human bodies strung up there by some murderer's hand, and just then, as your eye catches the sinister glance of one of those old Jews seated watchfully in the rear of his gloomy den of a shop, you cannot avoid fancying that the skinny claw with which he scratches his forehead can be no other than the one which tightened the rope—a soothing idea which causes you to glance involuntarily over your shoulder to see if the entrance to the bazâr is still open.

One day of wandering here and there will not suffice if you really wish to see every part of this strange city. There is the fez bazâr, in which are to be found fezzes of every country in the world, from that of Morocco to the Vienna fez, ornamented with inscriptions from the Koran, which serve to ward off evil spirits; the fez which is worn perched on the tops of their heads by the pretty Greek girls of Smyrna, surmounting their coils of black hair intertwined with coins; the little red fez of the Turkish women; soldiers', generals', sultans', dandies' fezzes, of all shades of red and every style, from the primitive ones worn in the days of Orcano to the large and elegant fez of Mahmûd, emblem of reform and an abomination in the eyes of Mussulmans of the old school.

Then there is the fur bazâr, where may be seen the sacred fur of the black wolf, which at one time none but the Sultan himself and his grand vizier were allowed to wear; the marten, used to trim state caftans; skins of white and black bears; astrakhan, ermine, blue wolf, and rich sable skins, upon which in old times the sultans would expend fabulous sums of money.

Then the cutlery bazâr is worth a visit, if only to examine those huge Turkish shears whose bronzed and gilded blades, adorned with fantastic designs of birds and flowers, open with a murderous sweep wide enough to swallow up entirely the head of an unfavorable critic.

There are the gold-thread embroidery, china, household utensils, and tailors' bazârs, all differing from one another in size, shape, and character, but all in one respect alike, that in none of them do you ever see a woman either attending to the customers or working apart. At the very most, it may occasionally happen that a Greek woman, seated for a moment in front of some tailor's shop, will timidly offer to sell you a handkerchief she has just finished embroidering. Oriental jealousy forbids shopkeeping to the fair sex, as offering too wide a field for coquetry and intrigue. 151

In other parts of the Great Bazâr it is as well for a stranger not to venture unless he is accompanied by a dragoman or one of the shopkeepers. Those are the interior parts of the various districts into which this strange city is divided—the islands, as it were, about which wind and twist the rapid currents of streets and byways. If it is a difficult matter to keep from losing your way among the main thoroughfares, in here it is quite impossible. From passage-ways scarcely wider than a man's shoulders, where it is necessary to stoop to avoid striking your head, you come out upon tiny courtyards encumbered with bales and boxes, where hardly so much as a single ray of light can penetrate. Feeling your way down flights of wooden steps, you come to other courts lighted only by lanterns, from which you descend below ground, or, climbing up again into what passes for the light of day, stumble with bent head through long, winding corridors, beneath damp roofs and between black and moss-grown walls, to come at last upon some small hidden doorway, and suddenly find yourself exactly where you started. Everywhere shadowy forms are seen coming and going; dusky shapes stand immovable in dark corners, outlines of persons handling merchandise or counting money; lights which flash ahead of you at one moment, and the next, disappear; a sound of hurrying footsteps, of low, eager voices, coming from you don't know where; reflections thrown from unseen lights; suspicious encounters; strange odors like those one might expect to escape from a witch's cave; and apparently no possible means of escape from it all. The dragoman is very apt to conduct his victim through these quarters on his way to those shops, usually somewhat apart, which contain a little of everything, like Great Bazârs in miniature or a superior sort of second-hand shop, extremely curious and interesting, but extremely perilous as well, since they contain such a variety of rare and attractive objects as to woo the money out of the pocket of the veriest miser. The shopkeepers here are great solemn knaves, thoroughly well versed in every art appertaining to their business, and, polyglot like their brothers of the trade, have a certain dramatic power which they employ in the most entertaining manner to tempt people to buy, sometimes rising to the level of genuinely good acting. Their shops usually consist of dark little holes cluttered up with boxes and chests of drawers, where lights have to be lit in order to see anything, and there is barely enough space to turn around in. After displaying a few trifles inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl, some bits of Chinese porcelain, a Japanese vase or two, and some other things of the same sort, the shopkeeper informs you with an impressive air that he sees what sort of person you are, and will now bring out something especially suited to you. He then proceeds to pull out a certain drawer, whose contents he empties upon the table. There are all manner of knick-knacks and gewgaws—a peacock-feather fan, a bracelet made of old Turkish coins, a little leather cushion with the Sultan's monogram embroidered upon it in gold, a Persian hand-glass painted with a scene from the *Book of Paradise*, one of those tortoise-shell spoons with which Turks eat cherry compôte, an ancient decoration of the Order of Osmanieh. You don't care for any of these, either? Very well. He turns out the contents of another, and this is a drawer which, as a matter of fact, was being reserved for your eye alone. There is a broken elephant's tusk; a Trebizond bracelet, looking as though it had been made from a lock of silver hair; a Japanese idol; a sandal-wood comb from Mecca; a large Turkish spoon, chased and filigreed; an antique silver narghileh, gilded and inscribed; bits of mosaic from St. Sophia; a heron's feather, which once ornamented the turban of Selim III.: for the truth of this last statement the merchant, as a man of honor, is willing to vouch. And still there is nothing which suits your fancy? Here, then, is another drawer, crammed full of treasures—an ostrich egg from Sahara; a Persian inkstand; a chased ring; a Mingrelian bow, with its quiver made out of an elk's skin; a Circassian two-pointed head-piece; a jasper rosary; a smelling-bottle of beaten gold; a Turkish talisman; a camel-driver's knife; a box of *attar-gul*. In Heaven's name, is there still nothing that tempts you? Have you no presents to make? no beloved relatives? no dear friends? Perhaps, though, your tastes run to stuffs and carpets. Well, here too he can assist you as a friend. "Behold, milor, this striped Kurdistan mantle, this lion skin; yonder rug is from Aleppo, with its little steel fastenings, while this *Casablanca* carpet, three fingers thick, is guaranteed to last for four generations; here, Your Excellency, are old cushions, old brocade scarfs, old silken coverlids, a little faded, a little frayed out at the edges, it is true, but such embroidery as you could not get in these days, even if you were to offer a fortune. You, *caballero*, have been brought here by a friend of mine, and for that reason I am going to let you have this ancient sash for the sum of five napoleons, and live myself on bread and garlic for one week in order to make up the loss." Should even this magnificent offer fail to move you, he whispers in your ear that he has in his possession, and is moreover willing to sell, the very rope with which the terrible Seraglio mutes strangled Nassuh Pasha, Muhammad Third's grand vizier. And if you laugh in his face and decline to swallow it, he gives it up at once like a sensible man, and proceeds to make his final effort, displaying before you, in rapid succession, a horse's tail such as were once carried before and after every pasha; a janissary's helmet, spattered with blood, which his own father picked up on the day of the famous massacre; a scrap of one of the flags carried in the Crimea, showing the silver star and crescent; a wash-basin studded with agates; a brazier of beaten copper; a dromedary-collar with its shells and bells; a eunuch's whip made of hippopotamus leather; a gold-bound Koran; a Khorassan scarf; a pair of slippers from a kady'n's wardrobe; a candlestick made from the claw of an eagle,—until at length your imagination is fired. The longing to possess breaks forth, and you are seized with a mad impulse to throw down your purse, watch, overcoat, everything you have, and fill your pockets with booty. One must indeed be an uncommonly well-balanced person, a very mountain of wisdom, to be able to withstand the temptations of this place, whence many an artist has come forth as poor as Job, and where more than one rich man has thrown away his fortune. 152

But before the Great Bazâr closes let us take a turn around to see how it looks at the end of the day. The crowd moves along more hurriedly; shopkeepers call out to you and gesticulate more imperiously than ever; Greeks and Armenians run through the streets calling aloud, with shawls or rugs hung over their arms, or form 153

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into groups, bargaining and discussing as they move about, then break up and form again into other groups farther off; horses, carriages, beasts of burden, all moving in the direction of the gateway, pass by in endless files. At this hour all those tradespeople with whom you have had fruitless negotiations during the day start to life again, circling around you in the dusk like so many bats: you see them peeping out from behind columns; come suddenly upon them at every turn; they cross in front of you or pass close by you gazing abstractedly in the air, to remind you by their presence of that certain rug or that bit of jewelry, and, if possible, reawaken your desire to possess it. Sometimes you are followed by a whole troop of them at once: if you stop, they do the same; if you slip down a side street, you find them there before you; turning suddenly, you are aware of a dozen sharp eyes fixed upon you which seem to fairly devour you whole. But already the fading light warns the crowd to disperse. Beneath the vaulted roof can be heard the voice of an invisible muezzin announcing the sunset from some wooden minaret. Some Turks have spread strips of carpet in the street before their shop-doors and are murmuring the evening prayer; others perform their ablutions at the fountains. The centenarians of the armor bazâr have already shut to their great iron doors; the smaller bazârs are empty; the farther ends of the corridors are lost in shadow, and the openings of the side streets look like the mouths of caves. Camels suddenly loom up close to you in the uncertain light; the voices of the water-carriers echo distantly among the arched roofs; the Turk quickens his step and the eunuch's eyes grow more alert; strangers are seen hurrying away; the entrance is closed; the day ended.

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And now on all sides I can hear the questions: What about St. Sophia? and the old Seraglio? and the Sultan's palaces? and the Castle of the Seven Towers? and Abdul-Aziz? and the Bosphorus. All in good time: each one of them shall be fully described in turn, but for still a little while longer let us wander here and there about the city, touching at every page upon some new theme just as some new idea strikes our fancy at every step.

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THE LIGHT.



View of Stamboul. Mosque of Validéh and Bridge.

And first of all I must speak of the light. One of my chief pleasures at Constantinople was to watch the sun rise and set from the bridge of the Validéh Sultan. At daybreak in the autumn there is almost always a light fog hanging over the Golden Horn, through which the city can only be seen indistinctly, as though one were looking through those thin gauze curtains which are lowered across the stage of a theatre in order to hide the details of some grand spectacular effect. Skutari is quite invisible; only her hills, a vague outline, can be faintly traced against the eastern sky. The bridge, as well as both banks, is deserted. Constantinople is buried in slumber, and the profound silence and solitude lend solemnity and impressiveness to the scene. Presently behind the Skutari hills the sky begins to show streaks of gold, and, one by one, against that luminous background, the inky points of the cypress trees stand out clear and defined, like a company of giants drawn up in battle-array on the heights of her vast cemetery. Now a single ray of light flashes from one end to the other of the Golden Horn, like the first faint sigh of returning consciousness, as the great city stirs and slowly awakens once more to life. Then, behind the cypresses on the Asiatic shore, a fiery eye shines forth, and immediately upon the white summits of St. Sophia's four minarets an answering blush is seen. In rapid succession from hill to hill, from mosque to mosque, to the farthest end of the Golden Horn, every minaret turns to rose, every dome to silver. The crimson flush creeps down from one terrace to another; the light increases, the veil is lifted, and all of Stambul lies revealed, rosy and resplendent on the heights, tinged with blue and violet shadows on the water's edge, but everywhere fresh and sparkling as though just risen from the waves. In proportion as the sun rises higher and higher the delicacy of the first coloring disappears, swallowed up in the flood of dazzling light, which becomes so white and blinding as in turn to slightly obscure everything, until toward evening, when the glorious spectacle recommences. So clear does the atmosphere then become that from Galata you can easily distinguish each separate tree on the farthestmost point of Kadi-keui. The huge profile of Stambul is thrown out against the sky with such distinctness and accuracy of detail that it would be quite possible to note one by one every minaret, every spire and cypress tree, that crowns her heights from Seraglio Point to the cemetery of Eyûb. The waters of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn turn to a marvellous ultramarine; the sky, of the color of amethysts in the east, grows fiery as it reaches Stambul, lighting up the horizon with a hundred tints of crimson and gold, making one think of the first day of creation. Stambul grows dim, Galata golden, while Skutari, receiving the full blaze of the setting sun upon her thousand casements, looks like a city devoured by flames. And this is the most perfect moment in all the twenty-four hours in which to see Constantinople. It is a rapid succession of the most exquisite tints—pale gold, rose, and lilac—mingling and blending one with another on the hillsides and water's surface, lending to first one part of the city and then to another the finishing touch to its perfect beauty, and revealing a thousand modest charms of hill- and country-side, which were too shy to thrust themselves into notice beneath the blaze of the noonday sun. It is then that you see the great melancholy suburbs losing themselves amid the shadows of the valleys—little purple-tinted hamlets smiling on the hilltops; towns and villages which languish and droop as though their life were ebbing away; others disappear from view, as you look at them, like fires which have been suddenly extinguished; others, again, apparently quite dead, come unexpectedly to life again, all aglow, and sparkle joyously for still some moments longer in the last rays of the sun. Finally, however, nothing remains but two shining summits on the Asiatic shore—Mt. Bûlgurlù and the point of the cape which guards the entrance to the Propontis. At first they are two golden coronets, then two little crimson caps, then two rubies; and then Constantinople is plunged in shadow, while ten thousand voices from ten thousand minarets announce that the sun has set.

THE BIRDS.

Constantinople possesses a grace and gayety all her own emanating from her myriads of birds of every species, objects of especial veneration and affection among the Turks. Mosque and grove, ancient wall and garden, palace and courtyard, are full of song, of the cheerful sound of twittering and chirping; everywhere there is the rush of wings, everywhere the busy, active little lives go on. Sparrows come boldly into the houses and eat from the women's and children's hands; swallows build their nests over the doorways of cafés and beneath the roofs of bazârs; innumerable flocks of pigeons, maintained by means of legacies from different sultans as well as private individuals, form black and white garlands around the cornices of the domes and terraces of the minarets; gulls circle joyously about the granaries; thousands of turtle-doves bill and coo among the cypress trees in the cemeteries; all around the Castle of the Seven Towers ravens croak and vultures hover significantly; kingfishers come and go in long lines between the Black Sea and Sea of Marmora; while storks may be seen resting upon the domes of solitary mausoleums. For the Turk each one of these birds possesses some pleasing quality or lucky influence. The turtle-dove is the patron of lovers; the swallow will protect from fire any building where her nest is built; the stork performs a yearly pilgrimage to Mecca; while the halcyon carries the souls of the faithful to Paradise. Hence they feed and protect them both from religious motives and from gratitude, and in return the birds make a continual festival around their houses, on the water, and among the tombs. In every quarter of Stambul they soar and circle about, grazing against you in their noisy flights, and filling the entire city with something of the joyous freedom of the open country, constantly bringing up before one's mind images of nature. 165

ASSOCIATIONS.

In no other city of Europe do the sites and monuments, either legendary or historical, act so forcibly upon the imagination as at Stambul, because in no other spot do they record events at once so recent and so picturesque. Elsewhere, in order to get away from the prose of modern every-day life, one is obliged to go back for several centuries; at Stambul a few years suffice. Legend, or what has all the character and force of legend, dates from yesterday. It is not many years since, in the square of Et-Meidan, the celebrated massacre of the Janissaries took place; not many years since the waters of the Sea of Marmora cast up upon the banks of the imperial gardens those twenty sacks containing each the body of a beauty of Mustafa's harem; not long since Brancovano's family was executed in the Castle of the Seven Towers, or European ambassadors were pinioned between two *kapuji-basci* in the presence of the Grand Seigneur, upon whose half-averted countenance there glowed a mysterious light; or within the walls of the old Seraglio that life—so extraordinary—a mingling of horrors, love, and folly, ceased finally to exist, which now seems to belong to such a far-distant past. Wandering about the streets of Stambul and reflecting upon all these things, you cannot help a feeling of astonishment at the calm, cheerful aspect of the city, gay with color and vegetation. "Ah, traitoress!" you cry, "what have you done with all those mountains of heads, those lakes of blood? How is it possible that everything has been so cleverly concealed, so wiped out and obliterated, that not a trace remains?" 166

On the Bosphorus, beneath the Seraglio walls and just opposite Leander's Tower, which rises from the water like a lover's monument, you may still behold the inclined plane down which the bodies of the unfaithful beauties of the harem were rolled into the sea; in the middle of the Et-Meidan the serpentine column still bears witness to the force of Muhammad the Conqueror's famous sabre; on the Mahmûd bridge the spot is still pointed out on which the fiery sultan annihilated at a single blow the adventurous dervish who had dared to fling an anathema in his face; in the Holy Well of the Balukli church the miraculous fish still swim about which foretold the fall of the City of the Palæologi; beneath the trees of the Sweet Waters of Asia you can visit those shady retreats where a dissolute sultana was wont to bestow upon the favorite of the hour that fatal love whose certain sequence was death. Every doorway, every tower, every mosque and park and open square, records some strange event—a tragedy, a love-story, a mystery, the absolutism of a padishah or the reckless caprice of a sultana; everything has a history of its own, and wherever you turn the near-by objects, the distant view, the balmy perfumed air, the silence, all unite to transport him whose mind is stored with these histories of the past out of himself, his era, and the city of to-day, so that not infrequently, when suddenly confronted with the suggestion that it is high time to think of returning to the hotel, he asks himself confusedly what it means, how can there be a "hotel." 167



Serpentine Column of Delphi.

RESEMBLANCES.

In those early days, fresh from reading masses of Oriental literature, I kept recognizing in the people I met on the streets famous personages who figure in the legends and history of the East: sometimes they answered so entirely to the picture I had drawn in my own mind of some celebrated character that I would find myself stopping short in the street to gaze after them. How often have I seized my friend's arm, and, pointing out some passer-by, exclaimed, "There he goes, by Jove! Don't you recognize him?" In the square of the Sultan Validéh I have many a time seen the gigantic Turk who hurled down rocks and stones upon the heads of Baglione's soldiers before the walls of Nicea; near one of the mosques I came across Unm Dgiemil, the old witch of Mecca who sowed thorns and brambles in front of Mohammed's house; coming out of the book bazâr one day, I ran against Digiemal-eddin, the great scholar of Brusa, who knew all the Arabian dictionary by heart, walking along with a volume tucked under his arm; I have passed close enough to Ayesha, the favorite wife of the Prophet, to receive a steady look from those eyes "like twin stars reflected in a well." I recognized in the Et-Meidan the beautiful and unfortunate Greek killed at the foot of the serpentine column by a ball from the huge guns of Orban; turning a sharp corner of one of the narrow streets of Phanar, I found myself suddenly face to face with Kara-Abderrahman, the handsomest young Turk of the days of Orkhan; I have seen Coswa, Mohammed's she-camel, and recognized Kara-bidut, Selim's black charger; I have encountered poor Fighani, the poet, who was condemned to go about Stamboul harnessed to an ass for having made Ibrahim's grand vizier the subject of a lampoon; I saw in one of the cafés the unwieldy form of Soliman, the fat admiral, whom the united efforts of four powerful slaves could with difficulty drag up from his divan; and Ali, the grand vizier, who failed to find throughout all Arabia a horse fit to carry him; and Mahmûd Pasha, that ferocious Hercules who strangled Suleiman's son; and, established before the entrance of the copyists' bazâr near the Bayezid square, that stupid Ahmed II., who would say nothing all day but "*Kosc! kosc!*" (Very well! very well!) Every character in the *Thousand and One Nights*—the Aladdins, the Zobeids, the Sinbads, the Gulnars, the old Jew dealers with their magic lamps and their enchanted carpets for sale—passed before me one after another like a procession of so many phantoms.

COSTUMES.

This is perhaps the very best period in which to study the dress of the Mussulman population of Constantinople. In the last generation, as will probably be the case in the next, it presented too uniform an appearance. You find it in a sort of transition stage, and presenting, consequently, a wonderful variety of form and color. The steady advance of the reform party, the resistance of the conservative Turks, the uncertainty and vacillation of the great mass of the people, hesitating between the two extremes—every aspect, in short, of the conflict which is being waged between ancient and modern Turkey—is faithfully reflected in the dress of her people. The old-fashioned Turk still wears his turban, his caftan and sash, and the traditional yellow morocco slippers, and, if he is one of the more strict and precise kind, a veritable Turk of the old school, the turban will be of vast proportions. The reformed Turk wears a long black coat buttoned close up under the chin, and dark shoes and trousers, preserving nothing Turkish in his costume but the fez. Some among the younger and bolder spirits have even gone farther, and, discarding the black frock-coat, substitute for it an open cut-away, light trousers, fancy cravat and jewelry, and carry a cane, and a flower in the buttonhole. Between these and those, the wearers of the caftan and the wearers of the coat, there is a deep gulf fixed. They no longer have anything in common but the name of Turk, and are in reality two separate nations. He of the turban still believes implicitly in the bridge Sirat, finer than a hair, sharper than a cimeter, which leads to the infernal regions; he

faithfully performs his ablutions at the appointed hours, and at sunset shuts himself into his house. He of the frock-coat, on the contrary, laughs at the Prophet, has his photograph taken, talks French, and spends his evening at the theatre. Between these two extremes are those who, having departed somewhat from the ancient dress of their countrymen, are still unwilling to Europeanize themselves altogether. Some of them, while wearing turbans, yet have them so exceedingly small that some day they can be quietly exchanged for the fez without creating too much scandal; others who still wear the caftan have already adopted the fez; others, again, conform to the general fashion of the ancient costume, but have left off the sash and slippers as well as the bright colors, and little by little will get rid of the rest as well. The women alone still adhere to their veils and the long mantles covering the entire person; but the veil has grown transparent, and not infrequently reveals the outline of a little hat and feathers, while the mantle as often as not conceals a Parisian costume of the latest mode. Every year a thousand caftans disappear to make room for as many black coats; every day sees the death of a Turk of the old school, the birth of one of the new. The newspaper replaces the *tespi*, the cigar the chibuk; wine is used instead of flavored water, carriages instead of the *arabà*; the French grammar supersedes the Arabian, the piano the *timbur*; stone houses rise on the sites of wooden ones. Everything is undergoing change and transformation. At the present rate it may well be that in less than a century those who wish to find the traces of ancient Turkey will be obliged to seek for them in the remotest provinces of Asia Minor, just as we now look for ancient Spain in the most out-of-the-way villages of Andalusia.

CONSTANTINOPLE OF THE FUTURE.

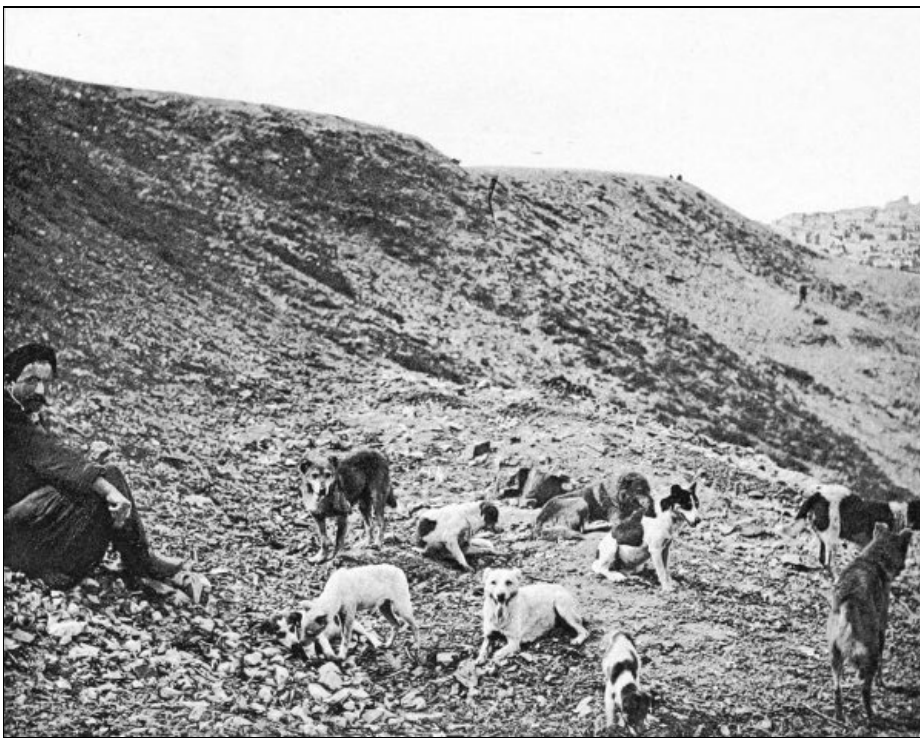
Often, while gazing at Constantinople from the bridge of the Sultan Validéh, I would be confronted by the question, "What is to become of this city in one or two centuries, even if the Turks are not driven out of Europe?" Alas! there is but little doubt that the great holocaust of beauty at the hands of civilization will have been already accomplished. I can see that Constantinople of the future, that Oriental London, rearing itself in mournful and forbidding majesty upon the ruins of the most radiant city in the world. Her hills will be levelled, her woods and groves cut down, her many-colored houses razed to the ground; the horizon will be shut in on all sides by long rows of palatial dwellings, factories, and workshops, broken here and there by huge business-houses and pointed spires; long, straight streets will divide Stambul into ten thousand square blocks like a checker-board; telegraph-wires will interlace like some monster spider-web above the roofs of the noisy city; across the bridge of the Sultan Validéh will pour a black torrent of stiff hats and caps; the mysterious retreats of the Seraglio will become a zoological garden, the Castle of the Seven Towers a penitentiary, the Hebdomon Palace a museum of natural history; everything will be solid, geometrical, useful, gray, hideous, and a thick black cloud of smoke will hide the blue Thracian heavens, to which no more ardent prayers will be addressed nor poets' songs nor longing eyes of lovers. At such thoughts as these I could not help feeling my heart sink within me, but then quickly there came the consoling fancy that possibly—who knows?—some charming Italian bride of the next century, coming here on her wedding journey, may be heard to exclaim, "What a pity! what a dreadful pity it is that Constantinople has changed so from what it was at the period of that old torn book of the nineteenth century I found in the bottom of my grandmother's clothes-press!"

THE DOGS.

In those coming days another feature of Constantinopolitan life will also have disappeared, which is now one of the most curious of her curiosities—the dogs. And, as this is a subject which really merits attention, I am going to devote some little space to it. Constantinople is one huge dog-kennel; every one can see this for himself as soon as he gets there. The dogs constitute a second population in the city, and, while they are less numerous than the first, they are hardly less interesting as a study. Every one knows how the Turks love and protect them, but just why they do so is not so easy to decide. I could not, for my own part, make out whether it is because the Koran recommends all men to be merciful to animals, or because they are supposed, like certain birds, to bring good luck, or because the Prophet loved them, or because they figure in their sacred books, or because, as some insist, when Muhammad the Conqueror made his victorious entry into the city through the breach in the gate of St. Romanus he was accompanied by a following composed principally of dogs. Be this as it may, the fact remains that many Turks leave considerable sums at their death for their maintenance, and when Sultan Abdul-Mejid had them all transported to the island of Marmora the people murmured, so that they were brought back amid public rejoicings, and the government has not attempted to interfere with them since. At the same time, the dog, having been pronounced by the Koran to be an unclean animal, not one out of all the innumerable hordes which infest Constantinople has an owner; any Turk harboring one would consider his house defiled. They are associated together in a great republic of freebooters, without collars or masters or kennels or homes or laws. Their entire lives are passed in the streets. There, scratching out little dens for themselves, they sleep and eat, are born, nourish their young, and die; and no one, at least in Stambul, interferes in the smallest degree with their occupations or their repose. They are the masters of the road. With us it is customary for the dogs to withdraw to allow horses and people to pass by. There it is quite different, people, camels, horses, donkeys, and vehicles making sometimes quite a considerable circuit in order not to disturb the dogs: sometimes in one of the most crowded quarters of Stambul four or five of them, curled up fast asleep directly in the middle of the street, will make the entire population turn out for half a day. And in Pera and Galata it is nearly as bad, only there it is done less out of respect for the dogs themselves than for their numbers. Were you to attempt to clear the road, you would have to keep up an uninterrupted series of blows and kicks from the moment you set out until your return. The utmost they will do voluntarily is, when they see a carriage and four coming like the wind down some level street, at the last moment, when there is no possible hope of its turning out and the horses' hoofs are fairly grazing their backs, they will slowly and unwillingly drag themselves a couple of feet to one side, nicely calculating the least possible distance necessary to save their precious necks. Laziness is the distinguishing quality of the Constantinople dogs. They lie down in the middle of the street, five

or six or a dozen of them in a row or group, curled up in such a manner as to look much more like heaps of refuse than living animals, and there they will sleep away the entire day, undisturbed by the din and clamor going on about them, and not rain or sun, wind or cold, has the least power to affect them. When it snows, they sleep under the snow; when it rains, they stay on until they are so completely covered with mud that when they finally get up they look like unfinished clay models of dogs, with nothing to indicate eyes, ears, or mouth. 176

The conditions of society, however, in Pera and Galata are not quite so favorable to the contemplative life as in Stambul, owing to the greater difficulty in obtaining food: in the latter place they live *en pension*, while in the former they eat *à la carte*. They take the place of scavengers, falling with joy upon refuse which hogs would decline as food, willing, in fact, to eat pretty much everything short of stones. No sooner have they swallowed sufficient to sustain life than they compose themselves to slumber, and continue to sleep until aroused again by the pangs of hunger. And they almost always sleep in the same spot. The canine population of Constantinople is divided into settlements and quarters, just as the human population is. Every street and neighborhood is inhabited, or rather held possession of, by a certain number of dogs, the relatives and friends of one family, who never leave it themselves or allow strangers to come in. They have a sort of police force, with outposts and sentries, who go the rounds and act as scouts. Woe to that dog who, emboldened by hunger, dares to adventure his person across the boundaries of his neighbors' territory! A crowd of infuriated curs give chase the instant his presence is discovered; if he is caught, they make short work of him; otherwise he is pursued as far as the confines of their own quarter, but no farther, as the enemy's country is nearly always both feared and respected. It would be impossible to convey any just idea of the skirmishes and pitched battles which arise over a disputed bone, a reigning belle, or an infringement of territorial rights. Two dogs encounter one another; a dispute follows, and instantly reinforcements pour in from every street, lane, and alley; nothing can be seen but a confused, moving mass enveloped in clouds of dust, out of which there issues such a deafening hurlyburly of howls, yelps, and snarls as would crack the ear-drums even of a deaf man. At last the group breaks up again, and, as the dust subsides, the bodies of the fallen may be seen extended on the ground. Love-passages, jealousies, duels, bloodshed, broken limbs, and lacerated skins are the affairs of every hour. Occasionally they assemble in such noisy troops in front of some shop that the owner and his assistants are obliged, in the interests of trade, to arm themselves with stools and bars and sally forth in approved military style, taking the enemy by storm; and then there follows a pandemonium of howls, yells, and lamentations mingling with the sound of cracked heads and ribs, enough to fairly make the welkin ring. In Pera and Galata especially these wretched beasts are so ill treated, so accustomed to expect a blow whenever they see a stick, that at the mere sound of a cane or umbrella on the sidewalk they make preparations for flight: even when they seem to be fast asleep they frequently have the corner of one eye, just the point of a pupil, open, with which to watch attentively, for a quarter of an hour at a time, the slightest movement of some distant object bearing a resemblance, no matter how slight, to a stick. So unused are they to humane treatment that if you pat the head of one of them in passing, a dozen others come running up, fawning and gambolling and wagging their tails, to receive a like caress, and accompany the generous patron all the way to the end of the street, their eyes shining with joy and gratitude. 177



Group of Dogs.

The condition of a dog in Pera and Galata is worse, all said, than that of a spider in Holland, and their's is usually admitted to be the most persecuted race in all the animal kingdom. When one sees the existence led by these miserable dogs, it is impossible not to think that there must be for them, as well, some compensation in another world. Like everything else in Constantinople, the sight of them recalled an historical reminiscence, but in their case it seemed like the bitterest irony to picture the life of Bayezid's famous hunting-pack, who ran about the imperial forests of Olympia wearing purple trappings and collars set with pearls. What a contrast of social conditions! Their unfortunate state has no doubt a great deal to do with their hideous appearance, but, 179

apart from that, they are almost all of the mastiff breed or wolf-dogs, bearing some resemblance to both foxes and wolves, or rather they do not bear a resemblance to anything, but are a horrible race of mongrels, spotted over with strange colors—about as large as the so-called butcher's dog, and so thin that each rib can be counted twenty feet off. Most of them, moreover, have become so reduced in the course of a life of incessant warfare that if you did not see them moving about you would be apt to take them for the mutilated remains of dogs. You find them with their tails cut off, ears torn, with skinned backs, sides laid open, blind in one eye, lame in two legs, covered with wounds, devoured by flies, reduced to the last possible stages to which a living dog can be brought—veritable types of war, famine, and pestilence. The tail may be spoken of, in connection with them, as an article of luxury: rare is it, indeed, for a Constantinople dog to enjoy the possession of one for more than a couple of months, at most, of public life. Poor creatures! they would move a heart of stone to pity, and yet at times they are so grotesquely maimed and altered, you see them going along with such a singular gait, such odd, ungainly movements, that it is almost impossible not to laugh outright. And, after all, neither hunger nor blows, nor even warfare, constitutes their most serious trial, but a cruel custom which has prevailed for some time in Pera and Galata. Sometimes in the middle of the night the peaceful inhabitants of a quarter are aroused from their slumbers by a diabolical uproar: rushing to their windows, they behold a crowd of dogs leaping and dancing about in agony, bounding high in the air, striking their heads against the walls, or rolling over and over in the dust: presently the uproar subsides, and in the morning, by the early light, the street is seen all strewn with dead bodies. It is the doctor or apothecary of the quarter, who, being in the habit of studying at night, has distributed a handful of pills in order to obtain a fortnight's quiet. Through these and other means it happens that there is some slight decrease in the number of dogs in Pera and Galata; but what does this avail, since at Stambul they are so rapidly on the increase that it is merely a question of time when the supply of food there will prove insufficient for their support, and colonists will be sent over to the other shore to supply the places of those families which have been exterminated and fill up all blanks caused by war, famine, or poison.

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THE EUNUCHS.

But there are other beings in Constantinople who arouse a far more profound sentiment of pity than the dogs. The eunuchs, who were first introduced among the Turks in spite of the clear and unmistakable voice of the Koran, which denounced this infamous form of degradation in no measured terms, continue to exist in defiance of recent legislation prohibiting the inhuman traffic, since stronger than either law or religion are the abominable thirst for gold which induces the crime and the cowardly egotism which derives advantage from it. These unfortunates are to be met at every street-corner, just as they are encountered on every page of history. In the background of every historical scene in Turkey may be traced one of these sinister forms grasping the threads of a conspiracy, laden with gold, or stained with blood—victim, favorite, or instrument of vengeance; if not openly formidable, secretly so; standing like a spectre in the shadow of the throne or blocking the approach to some mysterious doorway. And the same way in Constantinople: in the midst of a crowded bazâr, among the throng of pleasure-seekers at the Sweet Waters, beneath the columns of the mosques, beside the carriages, on the steamboats, in kâïks, at all the festivals, wherever people are assembled together, one sees these phantoms of men, these melancholy countenances, like a dark shadow thrown across every aspect of gay Oriental life. With the decline of the absolutism of the Sultan their political power has waned, just as the relaxing of Oriental jealousy has diminished their importance in private life; the advantages they once enjoyed have consequently become greatly reduced, and it is only with considerable difficulty that they are now able to acquire sufficient wealth or power to in any measure compensate them for their misfortune. No Ghaznefêr Aghâ would now be forthcoming to submit voluntarily to mutilation in order to become chief of the white eunuchs; all those of the present day are unwilling victims, and victims who receive no adequate compensation. Bought or stolen as children in Abyssinia or Syria, about one in every three survives the infamous knife, to be sold in defiance of the law, and with a pretence of secrecy far more revolting than if it were done openly. There is no need to have them pointed out: any one can recognize them at a glance. They are usually tall, fat, and flabby, with smooth, colorless faces, short waists, and long legs and arms. They wear fezzes, long black coats, and European trousers, and carry a whip made of hippopotamus skin, their badge of office, walking with long strides, and softly like big children. When on duty they accompany their mistresses on foot or horseback, sometimes preceding, sometimes following after, the carriage, either singly or in pairs, and looking around them with an ever-watchful eye, which, at the slightest suggestion of disrespect either by look or gesture on the part of a passer-by, becomes so full of angry menace as to send a cold chill down one's backbone; but, except in some such case as this, they have either no expression at all or else an utter weariness of everything in the world. I cannot recollect ever having seen one of them laugh. Some among them, while very young, look fifty years old, and others, again, give one the impression of youths who have suddenly, in the course of a few hours, grown into old men; many of them, sleek, soft, and well-rounded, look like carefully-fattened animals. They wear fine clothing, and are as scrupulously neat and redolent of perfume as some vain young girl. There are men so heartless as to laugh in the faces of these unhappy creatures as they pass them on the street; possibly they imagine that, having been accustomed to it from infancy, they are unconscious or nearly so of the gulf which divides them from the rest of the human family. But it is perfectly well known that this is not the case; and, indeed, who, after giving the subject a moment's thought, could suppose that it was? To belong to neither sex; to be merely the phantom of a man; to live in the midst of life, and yet not of it; to feel the billows of human passion surging all about you and be obliged to remain cold, impassive, unmoved, like a reef in the storm; to have your very thoughts, the natural, promptings of your whole being, held in check by an iron band that no amount of virtuous effort on your part will ever avail to bend or break; to have constantly presented before your eyes a picture of happiness toward which all around you tends, the centre about which everything circulates, the illuminating cause of all the conditions of life, and to know yourself immeasurably far away in the outside darkness, in a cold immensity of space, like some wandering spirit accursed of God; and to be, moreover, yourself the guardian of that happiness in which you can never participate, the actual barrier which the jealousy of man has reared between his own felicity and the outside world, the bolt with which he makes fast his door, the cloth he uses to conceal his treasures; to be obliged to live in the very midst of that sensuous, perfumed

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existence of youth and beauty and enjoyment, with shame upon your brow and fury in your soul, despised, set aside, without name, without family, without a mother or so much as one tender memory, cut off from the common ties of nature and humanity,—who could doubt for one instant that theirs is a life of torment which the mind is powerless to grasp, like living with a dagger thrust into one's heart?

And this outrage still continues: these unhappy creatures walk the streets of a European city, live among men, and, wonderful to relate, refrain from tearing, biting, stabbing, spitting in the face of that cowardly humanity which dares to look them in the eye without either shame or pity, while it busies itself with international associations for the protection of dogs and cats! Their whole existence is nothing but a series of tortures: as soon as the women of the harem find that they are unwilling to connive at their intrigues, they look upon them as spies and jailers, and hate them accordingly, punishing them by every device of coquetry that lies in their power until they sometimes drive them quite beyond all bounds, as in the case of the poor black eunuch in the *Lettere persiane*, who put his mistress in the bath. The very names they bear are a bitter irony, being called after flowers and perfumes, in allusion to the ladies whose guardians they are, as *possessors of hyacinths, guardians of lilies, custodians of roses and of violets*. And sometimes, poor wretches! they fall in love and are jealous and chafe, and become shedders of blood, or, seeing that some ardent glance directed toward their lady is returned, they lose their heads altogether and strike, as happened once during the Crimean War, when a eunuch struck a French officer in the face, and had his own head cut open in consequence by the other's sword. Who can tell what they suffer or how the mere sight of beauty must sometimes torture them, a caress enrage, a smile torment them, the sound of a kiss given and returned cause their hands to steal toward the dagger's hilt? It is hardly to be wondered at that in their great empty hearts little flourishes beside the cold passions of hate, revenge, and ambition; that they grow up embittered, cowardly, envious, and savage; that they have either the dumb, unreasoning devotion of an animal for their owners, or else are cunning and treacherous; or that, when they do get into power, they use it to revenge themselves upon mankind for the affront put upon them. The more desolate and isolated their lot, so much the more do they seem to feel a necessity for female companionship. Unable to be her lover, they seek to be the friend of woman. They even marry, sometimes choosing for their wives women who are pregnant, as Sunbullin, Ibrahim's chief eunuch, did, so as to have a child to love as his own, or, like the head eunuch of Ahmed II., they have harems filled with virgins in order that they may enjoy the contemplation and society of female loveliness; others adopt young girls, so that in old age they may have a female breast upon which to recline and not go down to the grave ignorant of all tenderness and loving care, having had nothing all their lives but scorn and contempt, or at best indifference. It is not uncommon for those who have grown wealthy at court or in some princely establishment, where they have combined with the duties of chief eunuch those of intendant, to purchase in old age a pretty villa on the Bosphorus, and there to pass the remainder of their days in feasting and gayety, seeking by these means to blot out the recollection of their misfortune.

Among all the various tales and anecdotes which were told me about these unfortunate beings one stands out with peculiar clearness in my memory. It was related by a young doctor of Pera in denial of the statement, sometimes made, that eunuchs do not suffer.

"One evening," said he, "I was leaving the house of a wealthy Mussulman, one of whose four wives was ill with heart disease; it was my third visit, and on coming away, as well as on entering, I was always preceded by a tall eunuch who called aloud the customary warning, 'Women, withdraw,' in order that the ladies and female slaves might know that there was a man in the harem and keep out of sight. On reaching the courtyard the eunuch returned, leaving me to make my way out alone. On this occasion, just as I was about to open the door, I felt a light touch on my arm: turning around, I found, standing close by me, another eunuch, a good-looking youth of eighteen or twenty, who stood gazing silently at me, his eyes filled with tears. Finding that he did not speak, I asked him what I could do for him. He hesitated a moment, and then, clasping my hand convulsively in both of his, he said in a hoarse voice, in which there was a ring of despair, 'Doctor, you know some remedy for every malady; tell me, is there none for mine?' I cannot express to you the effect those simple words produced upon me: I wanted to answer him, but my voice seemed to die away, and finally, not knowing what to do or say, I pulled the door open and fled. But all that night and for many days after I kept seeing his face and hearing those mournful words; and I can tell you that more than once I could feel the tears rising at the recollection."

Philanthropists, journalists, ministers, ambassadors, and you, gentlemen, deputies to the Stambul Parliament and senators of the Crescent, raise an outcry in God's name that this hideous ignominy, this black stain on the honor of mankind, may in the twentieth century be merely another dreadful memory like the Bulgarian atrocities.

THE ARMY.



Types of Turkish Soldiers.

Although I was fully aware before going to Constantinople that no traces of the magnificent army of former days were still to be seen, nevertheless, as soldiers are always a source of lively interest to me, I had no sooner arrived than I began to look about for them with eager curiosity. What I found, however, fell short of even what I had been led to expect. In place of the ancient costume, flowing, picturesque, and eminently warlike, they have adopted an ugly, forlorn uniform, consisting of red trousers, little scant jackets, stripes like a lackey's livery, belts like those of college students, and on every head, from the Sultan's down to the lowest man in the ranks, that miserable fez, which, besides being undignified and puerile, especially when perched on the head of a big, stout Mussulman, is the direct cause of any amount of ophthalmia and headache. The brilliancy of the Turkish army is lost, without any of that which belongs to the European military having been gained. The soldiers looked to me a mournful, half-hearted, dirty set of men. They may be brave, but they are certainly not impressive; and as to the nature of their training, one may form some idea of that from seeing officers and men employing their fingers in the street in place of handkerchiefs. One day I saw the soldier on guard at the bridge, where smoking is not allowed, bring this fact to the knowledge of a vice-consul by snatching the cigar out of his mouth; and on another occasion, in the mosque of the Dancing Dervishes, on the Rue de Pera, a soldier informed three Europeans that they were expected to uncover by knocking their hats off before my eyes: I knew very well that to raise a protesting voice on such occasions would mean nothing less than being seized and carried off bodily, like a bundle of old rags, to the guard-house. Hence throughout my entire stay at Constantinople my attitude toward the military was one of profound deference. On the other hand, one ceases to wonder at the uncoutness of the soldiers after seeing what sort of people they are before donning the uniform. One day in Skutari a hundred or so recruits, probably brought from the interior of Asia Minor, passed close by me, and it was a sight which aroused both my compassion and my disgust. They looked like those terrible bandits of Hassin the Mad who passed through Constantinople toward the close of the sixteenth century on their way to die by the Austrian cannon on the plain of Pesth. I can see before me now their wild, sinister faces, rough shocks of hair, half-naked, tattooed bodies, and barbarous ornaments, and I seem to smell again the close, sickening odor, like that of wild animals' dens, which they left behind them in the street. When the first news was brought of the massacres in Bulgaria, at once my thoughts turned to them. "My Skutari friends, beyond a doubt," I said to myself. It is a fact, however, that they form the one solitary picturesque feature which I am able to recall of the Mussulman army. 189

O glorious pageant of Bayezid, of Suleiman, of Muhammad! could one but behold you just once from the walls of Stambul, drawn up in glittering array upon the plain of Daüd Pasha! Every time I passed the triumphal gate of Adrianapolis I would be haunted by this brilliant vision, and pause to gaze fixedly at the opening, as though expecting each moment to see the pasha quartermaster come forth, heralding the approach of the imperial troops. 190

It was, in fact, the pasha quartermaster who marched at the head of the army, with two horse-tails, his insignia of rank, while behind him for a great distance flashed and glistened in the sunlight certain objects which were nothing less than the eight thousand brazen spoons fastened in the folds of the Janissaries' turbans; in their midst could be seen the waving herons' plumes and glittering armor of the colonels, followed by a crowd of servants laden with arms and provisions. Behind the Janissaries came a small troop of volunteers and pages dressed in silk, with iron mail, and shining head-pieces, accompanied by a band of music; after them, the cannoners, with the cannon fastened together by means of metal chains; and then another small band of aghas, pages, chamberlains, and feudal soldiers, mounted on steeds with plumes and breast-plates. All of these were only the advance-guard, above whose closely-packed ranks floated thousands of brilliantly colored standards, waving horse-tails, and such a sea of lances, swords, bows, quivers, and arquebuses that it was not easy to distinguish the lines of swarthy faces burned by exposure in the Candian and Persian wars; accompanying them was the discordant sound of drum and flute, of trombone and kettledrum, mingling with the 191

voices of the singers who escorted the Janissaries, and, with the rattle of arms, clanking of chains, and hoarse cries of Allah, forming a mighty roar, at once inspiring and terrible, which could be heard from the Daūd Pasha camp to the other bank of the Golden Horn. O poets and painters, you who have dwelt with loving touch upon every picturesque detail of that vanished life of the Orient! come to my aid now, that together we may recall to life the Third Muhammad's famous army and send it forth, brilliant and complete, from the ancient walls of Stambul. 192

Passed the advance-guard, we see another glittering body of troops. Is it the Sultan? No, as yet the deity has barely quitted his temple. This is only the favorite vizier's retinue, consisting of forty aghas clad in sable, and mounted upon horses caparisoned with velvet and with silver bits in their mouths; behind them are a crowd of pages and gorgeous grooms, leading other forty horses by the bridle, with gilded harness, and laden with shields, maces, and cimeters.

Another troop advances. This is not the Sultan, either, but a body of state officials—the chief treasurer, members of the council, and the high dignitaries of the Seraglio—and with them a band of players and a throng of volunteers wearing purple caps decorated with birds' wings and dressed in furs, scarlet silk, leopard skins, and Hungarian *kolpaks*, armed with long lances entwined with silk and garlands of flowers. 193

Still another sparkling wave of horsemen pours out of the Adrianapolis gate, but it is not the Sultan yet. This is the train of the grand vizier. First comes a crowd of mounted arquebusiers, *furieri*, and aghas, all high in favor with the Grand Seigneur; after them forty aghas of the grand vizier, surrounded by a forest of twelve hundred bamboo lances, borne by twelve hundred pages, and then the forty pages of the grand vizier clad in orange color and armed with bows, their quivers richly ornamented with gold. Following them are two hundred more youths, divided into six bands, each band having a distinctive color, and, riding in their midst, the governors and relatives of the chief minister; after these come a throng of grooms, armor-bearers, employés, servants, pages, and aghas, wearing gold-embroidered garments, and a troop of standard-bearers carrying aloft a multitude of silken flags; and last the *kiâya*, minister of the interior, escorted by twelve *sciau*, or legal executioners, followed by the grand vizier's band.

Another host pours out from the city-walls, and still it is not the Sultan, but a throng of *sciau*, *furieri*, and underlings, gorgeously attired and forming the retinues of the jurisconsults, the *molla* and *muderrî*; close behind them are the head-masters of the falcon, vulture, hawk, and kite hunts, followed by a line of horsemen carrying on their saddles leopards trained for the chase, and a crowd of falconers, esquires, grooms with ferrets, standard-bearers, and drummers, and packs of caparisoned and bejewelled dogs. 194

Another brilliant concourse sweeps out: the crowds of spectators prostrate themselves. At last the Sultan? No, not yet. This is not the head of the army, but its heart, the holy flame of courage and religious enthusiasm, the sacred ark of the Mussulman, around which mountains of decapitated heads have been reared, torrents of human blood have flowed—the green ensign of the Prophet, the flag among flags, taken from its place in the mosque of Sultan Ahmed, and now floating in the midst of a ferocious mob of dervishes clad in lion and bear skins, a circle of rapt-looking preaching sheikhs in camel's-hair cloaks, and two companies of emirs, descendants of the Prophet, wearing the green turban; all of whom together raise a hoarse clamor of shouts, prayers, shrill cries, and singing.

Another imposing troop of horsemen herald the approach, not of the Sultan yet, but of the judiciary, the judge of Constantinople and chief judge of Asia and Europe, whose enormous turbans may be seen towering above the heads of the *sciau*, who brandish their silver maces to clear a space for them through the crowd. With them ride the favorite vizier and vizier kaimakâm, their turbans decorated with silver stars and braided with gold; all the viziers of the Divan, before whom are borne horse-tails dyed with henné, attached to the ends of long red and blue poles; and last of all the military judges, followed by a train of attendants dressed in leopard skins and armed with lances—pages, armor-bearers, and sutlers. 195

The next company pours out, glittering, magnificent. Surely the Sultan? No—the grand vizier, wearing a purple caftan lined with sable and mounted upon a horse fairly covered with steel and gold, he is followed by a throng of attendants clad in red velvet, and a crowd of high dignitaries, and the lieutenant-generals of the Janissaries, among whom the *muftis* shine out like swans in the midst of a flock of peacocks; after these, between two lines of spearmen carrying gilded spears and two lines of archers with crescent-shaped plumes, come the gorgeous grooms of the Seraglio, leading by the bridle a long file of horses from Arabia, Turkestan, Persia, and Caramania, their saddles of velvet, reins gilded, stirrups chased, and trappings covered with silver spangles, and laden with shields and arms glittering with jewels; finally the two sacred camels are seen, bearing one the Koran, the other a fragment of the Kaaba.

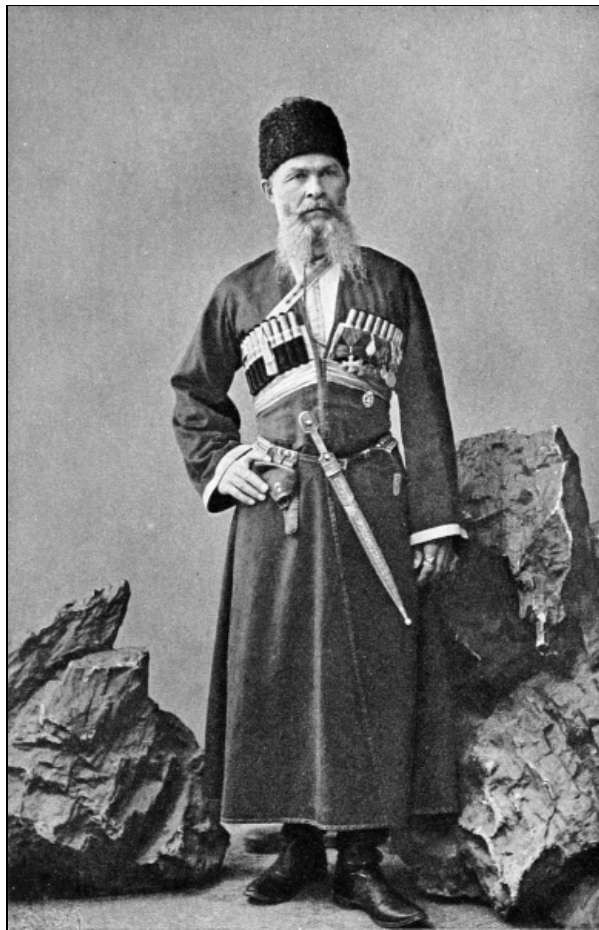
The grand vizier's retinue has passed, and a deafening clamor of drums and trumpets assails the ear. The spectators fly in every direction, cannon roar, a multitude of running footmen pour through the gate brandishing their cimeters, and here at last, in the midst of a thick forest of spears, plumes, and swords, the central point of those dazzling ranks of gold and silver head-pieces, beneath a cloud of waving satin banners, behold the Sultan of sultans, King of kings, the dispenser of thrones to the princes of the world, the shadow of God upon earth, emperor and sovereign lord of the White Sea and of the Black, of Rumelia and Anatolia, of the province of Salkadr, of Diarbekr, of Kurdistan, Aderbigian, Agiem, Sciam, Haleb, Egypt, Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, the coasts of Arabia and Yemen, together with all the other dominions conquered by the arms of his mighty predecessors and august ancestors or subdued by his own flaming and triumphant sword. The solemn and imposing train sweeps slowly by. Now and again, the serried columns swaying a little to right or left, a glimpse is caught of the three jewelled plumes which surmount the turban of the deity, the serious, pallid countenance, the breast blazing with diamonds; then the ranks close in once more, the cavalcade passes on, the threatening cimeters are lowered, the bystanders raise their bowed heads, the vision disappears. 196

After the imperial retinue a crowd of court officials come, one carrying on his head the Sultan's stool, another his sabre, another his turban, another his mantle, a fifth the silver coffee-pot, a sixth the golden coffee-pot; then more troops of pages, and after them the white eunuchs; then three hundred mounted chamberlains in white caftans, and the hundred carriages of the harem with silvered wheels, drawn by oxen hung with garlands 197

of flowers or horses with velvet trappings, and escorted by a troop of black eunuchs; then three hundred mules file by laden with baggage and treasures from the court; after them a thousand camels carrying water and a thousand dromedaries laden with provisions; next a crowd of miners, armorers, and workmen of various kinds from Stambul, accompanied by a rabble of buffoons and conjurers; and finally the bulk of the fighting ranks of the army—hordes of Janissaries, yellow *silidars*, purple *azabs*, *spahis* with red ensigns, foreign cavalry with white standards, cannon that belch forth blocks of lead and marble, the feudal soldiery from three continents, barbarian volunteers from the outlying provinces of the empire, seas of flags, forests of plumes, torrents of turbans—an iron avalanche on its way to overrun Europe like a curse sent from God, in whose track will be found nothing but a desert strewn with smoking ruins and heaps of skulls.

IDLENESS.

Although at certain hours of the day Constantinople wears an air of bustle and activity, in reality it is probably the laziest city in Europe, and in this respect both Turk and Frank meet on common ground. Every one begins by getting up at the latest possible hour in the morning. Even in summer, at a time when our cities are up and doing from one end to the other Constantinople is still buried in slumber. It is difficult to find a shop open or so much as to procure a cup of coffee until the sun is well up in the heavens. Hotels, offices, bazârs, banks, all snore together in one joyous chorus, and nothing short of a cannon would arouse them. Then the holidays! The Turks keep Friday, the Jews Saturday, and the Christians Sunday, besides which regular weekly ones are all the feast-days of the innumerable saints of the Greek and Armenian calendars, which are scrupulously observed; and although all of these holidays are supposed to affect only certain parts of the community respectively, in reality they provide large numbers, with whom, properly speaking, they have nothing whatever to do, with an excuse for being idle. You can thus form some idea of the amount of work accomplished in the course of a week. There are some offices which are only open twenty-four hours in the seven days. Each day some one of the five nationalities who go to make up the population of Constantinople is rambling about over the big city with no other object in the world than to kill time. In this art, however, the Turk yields to none. He can make a cup of coffee, costing two sous, last half a day, and sit immovable for five hours at a stretch at the foot of a cypress tree in one of the innumerable cemeteries. His indolence is a thing absolute and complete, an inertia resembling death or sleep, in which all the faculties seem to be suspended—an utter absence of any sort of emotion, a phase of existence completely unknown among Europeans. Turks dislike so much as to have the idea of movement presented to their minds. At Stambul, for instance, where there are no public walks, it is extremely unlikely that the Turks would frequent them if there were: to go to a place designed expressly for the purpose of being walked about in would, to their way of thinking, resemble work entirely too much. They enter the nearest cemetery or turn down the first street they come to, and follow, without any objective point, wherever their legs or the windings of the path or the people ahead may lead them. A Turk rarely goes to any spot merely for the purpose of seeing it. There are those among them, living in Stambul, who have never been farther than Kassim Pasha; Mussulman gentlemen who have never gotten beyond the Isles of the Princes, where they happen to have a friend living, or their own villa on the Bosphorus. For them the height of bliss consists in complete inactivity of body and mind; hence they abandon to the restless Christian all those great industries which require care and thought and travelling about from one place to another, and content themselves with such small trades as can be conducted sitting down in the same spot, and where sight can almost take the place of speech. Labor, which with us governs and regulates all the conditions of life, is a thing of quite secondary importance there, subordinated to what is pleasant and convenient. We look upon repose as a necessary interruption to work, while to them work is merely a suspension of repose. The first object, at all costs, is to sleep, dream, and smoke for a certain number of hours out of the twenty-four; whatever time is left over may be employed in gaining one's livelihood. Time, as understood by the Turks, signifies something altogether different from what it does to us. The hour, day, month, year, has not a hundredth part of the value there that it has in other parts of Europe. The very shortest period required by any official of the Turkish government in which to answer the simplest form of inquiry is two weeks. These people do not know what it is to desire to finish a thing for the mere pleasure of having done with it, and, with the single exception of the porters, one never sees a Turk employed on any business hurrying in the streets of Stambul. All walk with the same measured tread, as though their steps were regulated by the beat of a single drum. With us life is a seething torrent; with them, a sleeping pool.



A Turkish Official.

NIGHT.

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As by day Constantinople is the most brilliant, so by night it is the gloomiest, city in Europe. Occasional street-lamps, placed at long distances one from the other, hardly suffice to pierce the gloom of the principal streets, while the others are as black as caves, and not to be ventured into by one who carries no light in his hand. Hence by nightfall the city is practically deserted: the only signs of life are the night-watchmen, prowling dogs, the skulking figure of some law-breaker, parties of young men coming out of a subterranean tavern, and mysterious lights which appear and vanish again like *ignis fatui* down some narrow side-street or in a distant cemetery. This is the hour in which to look at Stambul from the heights of Pera or Galata. Each one of her innumerable little windows is illuminated, and, with the lights from the shipping, reflections in the water and the starry heavens, helps to light up four miles of horizon with a great quivering sea of sparkling points of fire, in which port, city, and sky melt imperceptibly one into another until they all seem to be part of one starry firmament. When it is cloudy, and through a break the moon appears, you see above the dark mass of the city, above the inky blots which mark the woods and gardens, the glittering rows of domes surmounting the imperial mosques, shining in the moonlight like great marble tombs, and suggesting the idea of a necropolis of giants. But most impressive of all is the view when there is neither moon nor star nor any light at all. Then one immense black shadow stretches from Seraglio Point to Eyûb, a great dark profile, the hills looking like mountains and their many pointed summits assuming all manner of fantastic shapes—forests and armies, ruined castles, rocky fortresses—so that one's imagination travels off into the region of dreams and fairy tales. Gazing across at Stambul on some such night as this from a lofty terrace in Pera, one's brain plays all sorts of mad pranks. In fancy you are carried into the great shadowy city; wander through those myriad harems, illuminated by soft, subdued lights: behold the triumphant beauty of the favorite, the dull despair of the neglected wife; watch the eunuch who hangs trembling and impotent outside the door; follow a pair of lovers as they thread some steep winding byway; wander through the deserted galleries of the Grand Bazâr; traverse the great silent cemeteries; lose yourself amid the interminable rows of columns in the subterranean cisterns; imagine that you have been shut up in the gigantic mosque of Suleiman, and make its shadowy corridors echo again with lamentations and shrieks of terror, tearing your hair and invoking the mercy of the Almighty; and then suddenly exclaim, "What utter nonsense! I am here on my friend Santoro's terrace, and in the room below there not only awaits me a supper for a sybarite, but a gathering of the most amusing wits in Pera to help me eat it."

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CONSTANTINOPLE LIFE.

Every evening a large number of Italians gathered at the house of my good friend Santoro—lawyers, artists, doctors, and merchants—among whom I passed many a delightful hour. How the conversation flowed! Had I only understood stenography, I might easily have collected the materials for a delightful book out of the various anecdotes and bits of gossip told there night after night. The doctor, who had just been called to a patient in the

harem; the painter, who was employed upon a pasha's portrait somewhere on the Bosphorus; the lawyer, who was arguing a case before a tribunal; the high official, who had knotted the threads of an international love-affair,—each separate experience as they related it formed a complete and highly entertaining sketch illustrative of Oriental manners and customs. Each fresh arrival is the signal for something new. "Have you heard the news?" one exclaims on entering: "the government has just paid the employés' salaries, due for over three months, and Galata is flooded with copper money." Then another arrives: "What do you suppose happened this morning? The Sultan got mad at the minister of finance and threw an inkstand at his head!" A third tells a story of a Turkish president of a tribunal. Provoked, it seems, by the wretched arguments employed by an unscrupulous French lawyer in defending a bad cause, he paid him this pretty compliment before the entire audience: "My dear advocate, it is really quite useless for you to take so much pains to try to make your case appear good. —;" And here he pronounced Cambronne's word in full: "no matter how you may turn and twist it, it is still—," and he said it again. 204

The conversation naturally covered geographical ground quite new to me. They used the same easy familiarity in talking of persons and events in Tiflis, Trebizond, Teheran, and Damascus as we do when it is a question of Paris, Vienna, or Geneva, in any one of which places they had friends or had lately been or were about going themselves. I seemed to be in the centre of another world, with new horizons opening out on all sides, and it was difficult to avoid a sinking feeling at the thought of the time when I would be obliged to take up once more the narrow and contracted routine of my ordinary life. "How will it ever be possible," I would ask myself, "to settle down again to those commonplace occupations and threadbare topics?" This is the way every one feels who has spent any time in Constantinople. After leading the life of that place, all others must necessarily appear flat and colorless. Existence there is easier, gayer, more youthful than in any other city in Europe; it is as though one were encamped upon foreign soil, surrounded by an endless succession of strange and unexpected sights, an ever-changing, shifting scene which leaves upon one's mind such a sense of the instability and uncertainty of all things human that you end by adopting something of the fatalistic creed of the Mussulman or else the reckless indifference of the adventurer. 205

The apathy of that people is something incredible; they live, as a poet has said, in a sort of intimate familiarity with death, looking upon life as a pilgrimage too short to attempt, even were it worth their while anyhow, great undertakings requiring long and sustained effort; and sooner or later this fatalism attacks the European as well, inducing him to live in a certain sense from day to day, without troubling himself more than necessary about the future, and playing in the world, so far as lies in his power, the simple and reposeful part of a spectator. Then the constant intercourse with so many nationalities, whose language you must speak and whose views to a certain extent you must adopt, does away with many of those fixed rules and conventionalities which have in our countries become iron-bound laws governing society, and whose observance or non-observance causes endless vexations and heartburnings.

The Mussulman population forms of itself a never-ending source of interest and curiosity, always at hand to be seen and studied, and so stimulating and enlivening to the imagination as to drive away all thought of ennui. The very plan of Constantinople helps to this end. Where in other cities the eye and mind are almost always imprisoned, as it were, in one street or narrow circuit, there every step presents a new outlet through which both may roam over immeasurable distances of space and scenes of entrancing beauty, and, finally, there is the absolute freedom of that life, governed by no one set of customs. One can do absolutely as he pleases; nothing is looked upon as out of the way, and the most astounding performances hardly cause a ripple of talk, forgotten almost as soon as told in that huge moral anarchy. Europeans live there in a sort of republican confederacy, enjoying a freedom from all restraint such as would only be possible in one of their own cities during some period of disorder. It is like a continual Carnival, a perpetual Shrove Tuesday, and it is this, even more than her beauty, which endears Constantinople so greatly to the foreigner, so that, thinking of her after long absence, one experiences a feeling almost amounting to home-sickness; while those Europeans who have made their homes there strike down deep roots and become as devotedly attached to her as her legitimate sons. The Turks are certainly not far wrong when they call her "the enchantress of a thousand lovers," or say in their proverb that for him who has once drunk of the waters of Top-Khâneh there is no cure—he is infatuated for life. 206

THE ITALIANS.

The Italian colony at Constantinople, while it is one of the most numerous, is far from being the most prosperous there. It numbers among it but few rich persons, and many who are wretchedly poor, especially those who come from Southern Italy and are unable to find work: it is also the colony most poorly represented by the press, when indeed it is represented at all, its newspapers only making their appearance to promptly vanish again. When I was there the colony was awaiting the issue of the *Levantino*, and meanwhile a sample copy was put in circulation setting forth the academic titles and personal gifts of the editor: I made out seventy-seven in all, without counting modesty.

One should walk down the Rue de Pera of a Sunday morning, when the Italian families are on their way to mass: you hear every dialect in Italy. Sometimes I used to enjoy it, but not always: it was too depressing to see so many of one's fellow-countrymen homeless wanderers on the face of the earth; many of them, too, must have been cast up on those shores by storms of misfortune and strange, uncomfortable adventures. And then the old people who would never see Italy again; the children in whose ears that name meant nothing more than a place—dear, no doubt, but distant and unknown; and those young girls, many of whom must inevitably marry men of other nationalities and found families in which nothing Italian will survive beyond a proper name or two and the fond memories of the mother. I encountered pretty Genoese, looking as though they might just have come down from the gardens of Acquasola; charming Neapolitan faces; graceful little heads which I seemed to have seen a hundred times beneath the porticoes of Po or the Milanese arcades. I felt like gathering them all into a bunch, tying them together with rose-colored ribbons, and marching them two by two on shipboard, conveying them back to Italy at the rate of fifteen knots an hour. I would also have liked to take back with me, as a curiosity, a 208

sample of the language spoken by those born in the Italian colony, especially those of the third or fourth generation. A Crusca academician, on hearing it, would have taken to his bed with a raging fever. A language formed by mingling the Italian spoken by a Piedmontese doorkeeper, a Lombardy hack-driver, and a Romagnol porter would, I think, be less outrageous than that spoken on the banks of the Golden Horn. It is Italian which, impure at the outset, has been mixed with four or five other languages, each impure in their turn; and the most singular part of it is that in the midst of all these barbarisms you suddenly come plump upon some such scholarly word or phrase as *puote*, *imperocche*, *a ogni pie sospiuto*, *havvi*, *puossi*, witnesses to the efforts made by some of our worthy compatriots, who by dipping into anthologies seek to preserve the *celestial Tuscan speech*. But, as compared with the rest, these might well lay claim, as Cesari said, to a reputation for using choice language. Some of them can hardly be understood at all. One day I was being escorted, I don't remember just where, by an Italian youth of sixteen or seventeen, a friend of a friend of mine, who was born in Pera. As we walked along I began asking him some questions, but soon found that he did not want to talk; he answered me in a low tone and as shortly as possible, growing red in the face as he did so and hanging his head; he was so evidently unhappy that I presently asked him what it was that troubled him so much. "Oh," said he with a despairing sigh, "I talk so badly!" As we continued our conversation I found that he spoke indeed a strange dialect, full of outlandish words and strongly resembling the so-called Frank language, which, as a French wit once said, consists in pouring out as rapidly as possible a quantity of Italian, French, Spanish, and Greek nouns and tenses until you happen to strike one the listener understands. It is, however, seldom necessary to go to so much trouble in Pera or Galata, where almost every one, including the Turks, can speak, or at least understand, some Italian, though this language, if you can call it a language, is almost exclusively a spoken one, if you can call it speaking. The tongue generally employed for writing is French. Of Italian literature there is none. I recollect on one solitary occasion, in a Galata café crowded with merchants, finding at the foot of the commercial intelligence and quotations of the Bourse, printed in French and Italian, eight mournful little verses all about zephyrs and stars and sighs. Unhappy poet! it seemed as though I could see you before me, buried beneath huge piles of merchandise, composing those verses with your last breath.

THE THEATRES.

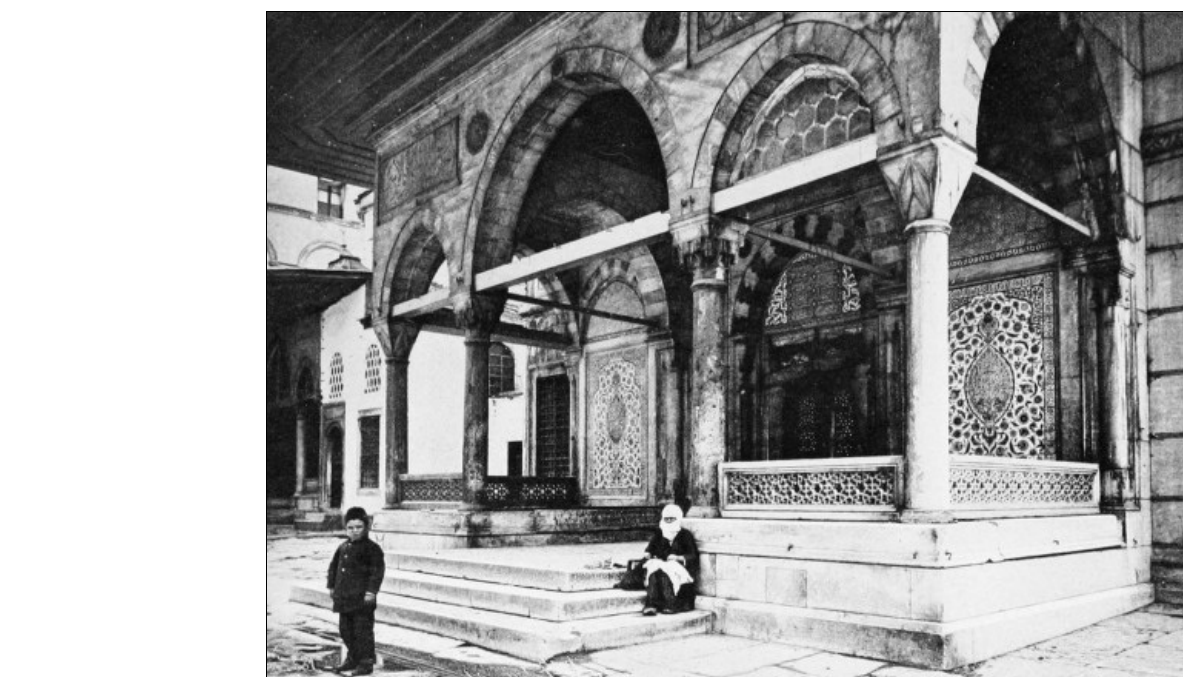
Any one who is blessed with a pretty strong stomach can pass his evenings while at Constantinople at the play: he may, moreover, choose among quite a number of almost equally wretched little theatres of various sorts, many of which are beer-gardens and wine-shops as well. At some one of these one can always find the Italian comedy, or rather a troupe of Italian actors, whose efforts frequently make one wish the whole arena could be converted into a vegetable market. The Turks, however, frequent by preference those theatres in which certain bare-necked, brazen-faced, painted French women sing light songs to the accompaniment of a wretched orchestra. One of these theatres was the Alhambra, situated in the Grande Rue de Pera: it consisted of a long apartment, always crowded to the utmost, and red with fezzes from stage to entrance. The nature of those songs, and the bold gestures which those intrepid ladies employed in order to make their meaning perfectly clear, no one could either imagine or credit unless indeed he had been to the *Capellanes* at Madrid. At anything especially coarse or impudent all those great fat Turks, seated in long lines, broke into loud roars of laughter, and then the habitual mask of dignity and reserve would drop from their faces, exposing the depths of their real nature and every secret of their grossly sensual lives. There is nothing that the Turk conceals so habitually and effectually as the sensual nature of his tastes and manner of life. He never appears in public accompanied by a woman, rarely looks at, and never speaks to, one, and considers it almost an insult to be inquired of concerning his wives. Judging merely by outside appearances, one would take this to be the most austere and straitlaced people in the world, but it is only in appearance. The same Turk who colors to the tips of his ears if one so much as asks if his wife is well, sends his boys, and his girls too, to listen to the coarse jests of *Kara-gyuz*, corrupting their minds before their senses are fairly awakened, while he himself is fully capable of abandoning the peaceful enjoyments of his own harem for such excesses as Bayezid the Thunderbolt set the first example of, and Mahmûd the Reformer was doubtless not the last to follow. And, indeed, were proof needed of the profound corruption which lurks beneath this mask of seeming austerity, one need go no farther than to that selfsame *Kara-gyuz*. It is a grotesque caricature of a middle-class Turk, a sort of *ombra chinese*, whose head, arms, and legs are made to accompany with appropriate gestures the developments of some extravagant burlesque having usually a love-intrigue for its plot. The marionette is worked behind a transparent curtain, and resembles a depraved Pulcinello, coarse, cynical, and cunning. Sensual as a satyr, foul-mouthed as a fishwife, he throws his audience into paroxysms of laughter and enthusiasm by every sort of indecent jest and extravagant gesture. Before the censorship curbed to some small extent the hitherto unbridled looseness of this performance, the figure was made to give visible proof of its corporeal resemblance to Priapus, and not infrequently upon this lofty and elevating point the whole plot hinged.

TURKISH COOKING.

Wishing to investigate for myself the Turkish manner of cooking, I got my good friends of Pera to take me to a restaurant *ad hoc* where every kind of Turkish dish is to be had, from the most delicious delicacies of the Seraglio to camel's meat prepared as the Arabians eat it, and horseflesh dressed according to the Turkoman fashion. Santoro ordered the breakfast, severely Turkish from the opening course to the fruit, and I, invoking the names of all those intrepid spirits who have faced death in the cause of science, conscientiously swallowed a part of each without so much as a groan. There were upward of twenty dishes, the Turks being a good deal like children in their liking to peck at a quantity of different kinds of food, rather than satisfy their appetite with a few solid dishes. Shepherds of the day before yesterday, they seem to disdain a simple table as though it were a trait of rustic niggardliness. I cannot give a clear account of each dish, many of them being now no more than a vague and sinister memory. I do, however, remember the *kibab*, which consisted of little scraps of mutton

roasted on the coals, seasoned with a great deal of pepper and cloves, and served on two soft, greasy biscuits—a dish not to be named among the lesser sins. I can also recall vividly the odor of the *pilav*, the *sine quâ non* of a Turkish meal, consisting of rice and mutton, meaning to the Turk what macaroni does to the Neapolitan or *cuscussu* to the Arab or *puchero* to the Spaniard. I have not forgotten either—and it is the sole pleasant memory connected with that repast—the *rosh'ab*, which is sipped with a spoon at the end of the meal: it is composed of raisins, plums, apples, cherries, and other fruits, cooked in water with a great deal of sugar, and flavored with essence of musk, citron, and rose-water. Then there were numberless other preparations of mutton and lamb, cut in small pieces and boiled until no flavor remained; fish swimming in oil; rice-balls wrapped in grape-leaves; sugar syrups; salads served in pastry; compôtes; conserves; sauces, flavored with every sort of aromatic herb—a list as long as the articles of the penal code for relapsed criminals; and finally the masterpiece of some Arabian pastry-cook, a huge dish of sweetmeats, among which were conspicuous a steamboat, a fierce-looking lion, and a sugar house with grated windows. When all was over I felt a good deal as though I had swallowed the contents of a pharmacist's shop or assisted at one of those feasts which children prepare with powdered brickdust, chopped grass, and stale fruit—not unattractive-looking when seen at a distance. All the dishes are served rapidly, four or five at a time. The Turks dive into each with their fingers, the knife and spoon only, being in common use among them, and one drinking-goblet serves for the whole company, the waiter keeping it constantly filled with flavored water. 214

These customs, however, were not followed by the party who were breakfasting at the table adjoining ours. They were evidently Turks who valued their ease, even to the extent of poisoning their slippers upon the table: each had a plate to himself, and they plied their forks very skilfully, drinking liquors freely in despite of Mahomet. I observed, moreover, that they failed to kiss the bread before beginning to eat, as every good Mussulman should, and that more than one longing glance was sent in the direction of our bottles, although the muftis pronounce it a sin to so much as cast the eye upon a bottle of wine. There is, indeed, no doubt that this "father of abominations," one drop of which is sufficient to bring down upon the head of the sinning Mussulman the "curses of every angel in heaven and earth," gains new disciples among the Turks every day, and that nothing but the fear of public opinion prevents its open use. Were a thick cloud to descend upon Constantinople some day, and after an hour suddenly be lifted, I have little doubt that the sun would surprise fifty thousand Turks, each one in the act of lifting the bottle to his lips. In this, as in almost every other shortcoming of the Turks, it was the sultans who were the stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Singular to relate, it is that very dynasty which rules over a people among whom it is considered a sin in the sight of God to drink wine at all, which has produced more drunkards than any other line of rulers in Europe; so sweet is forbidden fruit even in the estimation of the "shadow of God upon earth." It was, we are told, Bayezid I. who headed the long list of imperial tipplers, and here, as in the case of the first sin, woman was the temptress, the wife of this Bayezid, a daughter of the king of Servia, offering her husband his first glass of Tokay. Next Bayezid II. got intoxicated on Cypress and Schiraz wines; then the selfsame Suleiman I. who fired every ship in the port of Constantinople that was laden with wine, and poured molten lead down the throats of those who drank the forbidden liquor, himself died when drunk, shot by one of his own archers. Then comes Selim II., surnamed the *messth* (sot), whose debauches lasted three days, and during whose reign men of the law and men of religion drank openly. In vain did Muhammad III. thunder against this "abomination devised by Satan;" in vain did Ahmed I. close all the taverns and destroy every wine-press in Stambul; in vain did Murad IV. patrol the city accompanied by an executioner, who beheaded in his presence every unfortunate whose breath witnessed against him, while he himself, ferocious hypocrite that he was, staggered about the apartments of the seraglio like any common frequenter of the pothouse. Since his day the bottle, like some gay little black imp, has crept into the seraglio, lurks in the bazâr, hides beneath the pillow of the soldier, thrusts its little silver or purple neck from beneath the divan of the beauty, and, crossing the threshold of the very mosques themselves, has stained the yellow pages of the Koran with sacrilegious drops. 215



Turbah of Sultan Selim II in St. Sophia.

Speaking of religion, while wandering about the streets and byways of Constantinople I used often to wonder whether, were it not for the voice of the muezzin, Christians would see anything to remind them that there was any difference between the religion of this people and their own. The Byzantine architecture of the mosques makes them seem very like churches; of the Islam rites there is no external evidence; while Turkish soldiers may be seen escorting the viaticum through the streets. An uneducated Christian might remain a year in Constantinople without being aware that Mohammed, not Christ, claimed the allegiance of the greater part of the population; and this led me on to reflect upon the slight nature of the fundamental difference—the blade of grass, as the Abyssinian Christians called it in speaking to the first followers of Mohammed—which divides the two religions, and the trifling cause which led Arabia to adopt Islamism instead of Christianity, or, if not Christianity, at all events something so closely resembling it that, even had it never developed into that outright, it would have seriously altered the destinies of the entire Eastern world. This slight cause was nothing more or less than the voluptuous nature of a certain handsome young Arabian, tall, fair, ardent, with black eyes and musical voice—he lacked the force to dominate his own passions, and so, instead of cutting at the root of his people's prevailing sin, he contented himself with pruning the branches, and in lieu of proclaiming conjugal unity as he proclaimed the unity of God, merely confined within somewhat narrower bounds, and then proceeded to give the countenance of religion to, the dissolute selfishness of men. No doubt he would have had to encounter a more determined opposition in the one case than in the other, but that it was in his power to succeed who can question when it is remembered that in order to establish the worship of one sole God among a people given over to idolatry he was obliged to first overthrow an enormous superstructure of tradition and superstition, including innumerable grants and privileges all closely interlaced, the result of centuries of growth, and that he made them accept, as one of the dogmas of his religion for which millions of believers subsequently died, a paradise which at its first announcement aroused a universal feeling of scorn and indignation? Unfortunately, however, this handsome young Arab temporized with his passions, and as a consequence the face of half the globe is changed, since polygamy was, without doubt, the besetting vice of his rule and the principal cause of the decadence of all those races who have adopted his religion. It is the degradation of one sex for the benefit of the other, the open sanction of a glaring injustice which disturbs the entire course of human rights, corrupts the rich, oppresses the poor, encourages ignorance, breaks up the family, and by causing endless complications in the rights of birth among the reigning dynasties overturns kingdoms and states, finally placing an insuperable barrier in the way of the union of Mussulman society with the people of other faiths who populate the East. If, to return to the original proposition, that handsome young Arab had only been endowed with a little more strength of character, had the spiritual in his nature but outweighed, by ever so small an amount, the animal, who knows?—perhaps we would now have an Orient orderly, well-governed, and the world be a century nearer universal civilization.

RAMAZAN.

Happening to be in Constantinople in the month of Ramazân, the ninth month in the Turkish calendar, in which the twenty-eight days' fast falls, I was able to enjoy every evening a spectacle so exceedingly comical that I think it merits a description. Throughout the entire fast the Turks are forbidden to eat, drink, or smoke from sunrise to sunset. Most of them make it up by feasting all night, but as long as the sun is shining the rule is very generally observed, and no one dares, in public at any rate, to transgress it.

One morning my friend and I went to call upon a friend of ours, a young aide-de-camp of the Sultan, who prided himself upon his liberal views. We found him in one of the rooms on the ground floor of the imperial palace with a cup of coffee in his hand. "Why," said Yunk, "how do you dare to drink coffee hours after sunrise?" The young man shrugged his shoulders, and remarked carelessly that he did not care a fig for Ramazân or the fast; but just at that moment, a door near by suddenly opening, he was in such a hurry to hide the telltale cup that half its contents were spilled at his feet. One can readily imagine from this incident how rigorously all those must abstain whose entire day is passed beneath the public eye, the boatmen for instance. To get a really good idea of it one should stand on the Sultan Validéh bridge at about sunset. What with the boats at the landings and those which are going from one place to another, the ones near at hand and those in the distance, there must be very nearly a thousand in sight. Every boatman has fasted since sunrise, and by this time is ravenously hungry. His supper is all ready in the *kâik*, and his eyes travel constantly from it to where the sun is nearing the horizon, and then back again, while he has the restless, uneasy air of a wild animal who paces about his cage as the feeding-hour approaches. Sunset is announced by the firing of a gun, and until that signal is heard not so much as a crumb of bread or drop of water crosses the lips of one of them. Sometimes in a retired spot in the Golden Horn we would try to induce our boatman to eat something, but the invariable answer was, "Jok! jok! jok!" (No! no! no!), accompanied by an uneasy gesture toward the western horizon. When the sun gets about halfway down behind the mountains the men begin to finger their pieces of bread, inhaling its smell voluptuously. Then it gets so low that nothing can be seen but a golden arc, and the rowers lay down their oars. Those who are busy and those who are idle, some midway across the Golden Horn, some lying in retired inlets, others on the Bosphorus, others over near the Asiatic shore, others, again, who are plying on the Sea of Marmora, one and all, turning toward the west, remain immovable, their eyes fixed on the fast-disappearing disk with mouth open, kindling eye, and bread firmly clasped in the right hand. Now nothing can be seen but a tiny point of fire: a thousand hunks of bread are held close to a thousand mouths, and then the fiery eye drops out of sight, the cannons thunders, and on the instant thirty-two thousand teeth tear a thousand huge mouthful from a thousand loaves! But why say a thousand, when in every house and café and restaurant a similar scene is being enacted at precisely the same moment, and for a short time the Turkish city is nothing but a huge monster whose hundred thousand jaws are all tearing and devouring at once?

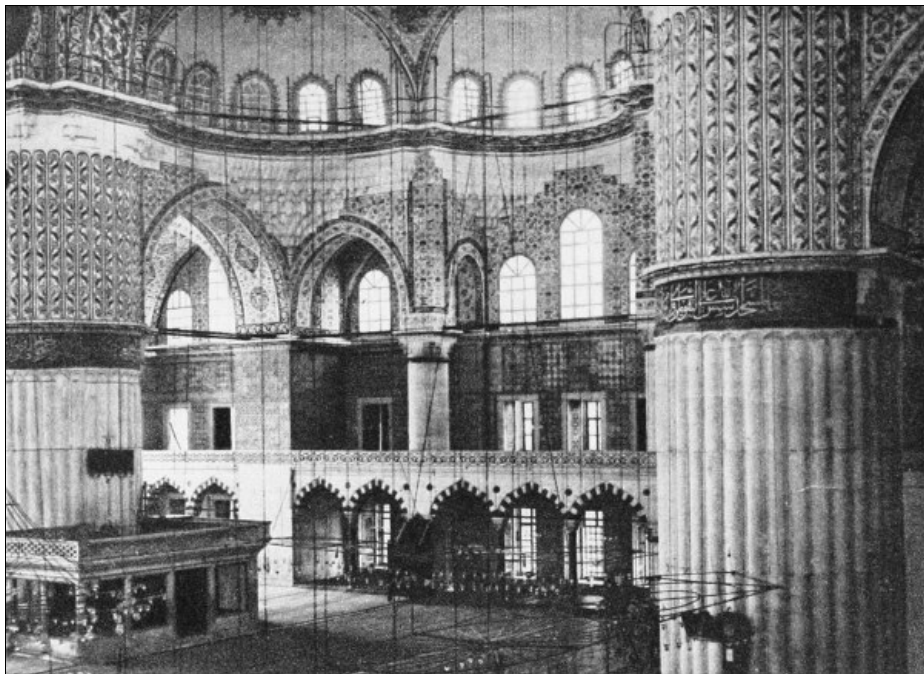
But think what this city must have been in the great days of the Ottoman glory! I kept thinking of that all the time. How it must have looked when not a single cloud of smoke arose from the Bosphorus, all white with sails, to make ugly, black marks against the blue of sky and water! In the port and the inlets of the Sea of Marmora, among the picturesque battle-ships of that period with their lofty carved prows, silver crescents, violet standards, and gilded lanterns, floated the battered and blood-stained hulks of Spanish, Genoese, and Venetian galleys. No bridges spanned the Golden Horn, which was covered with myriads of gayly-decorated boats plying constantly from one shore to the other, among which could be distinguished afar off the snowy-white launches of the Seraglio, covered with gold-fringed scarlet hangings and propelled by rowers dressed in silk. Skutari was then no more than a village: seen from Galata, she only appeared to have a few houses scattered about on the hillside; no lofty palaces as yet reared their heads above the hilltops of Pera; the appearance of the city was doubtless less impressive than now, but far more Oriental in character: the law prescribing the use of colors being then in full force, one could determine accurately the religion of the occupant from the color of each house. Except for its public and sacred edifices, which were white as snow, Stambul was entirely red and yellow; the Armenian quarters were light, and the Greek quarters dark gray; the Hebrew quarter, purple. As in Holland, the passion for flowers was universal, so that the gardens were like huge bouquets of hyacinths, tulips, and roses. The exuberant vegetation not having been as yet checked on the surrounding hillsides by the growth of new suburbs, Constantinople presented the appearance of a city built in a forest. The public thoroughfares were nothing but lanes and alleys, but they were rendered picturesque by the varied and brilliant crowds which thronged them. The huge turbans worn by the men lent them all an air of dignity and importance. The women, with the single exception of the Sultan's mother, were so rigorously veiled as to show nothing but the eyes, and so formed a population apart, anonymous, enigmatical, which lent to the entire city a certain air of secrecy and mystery. Severe laws controlled the dress of every individual, so that from the shape of his turban or color of his caftan one could tell the precise rank, occupation, office, or condition of every one he met, as though the city had been one great court. The horse being as yet almost "man's only coach," thousands of cavaliers filled the crowded streets, while long files of camels and dromedaries belonging to the army traversed the city in all directions, giving it something of the savage and imposing air of an ancient Asiatic metropolis. Gilded arabas, drawn by oxen, passed carriages hung with the green cloth of the *ulemi* or scarlet cloth of the *kâdi-aschieri*, and light *talike* hung with satin and fantastically painted. Troops of slaves marched along, representing every country from Polonia to Ethiopia, clanking the chains riveted on them in the field of battle. On the street-corners, in the squares and the courtyards of the mosques, groups of soldiers collected, clad in glorious rags, displaying their battered arms and scars still fresh from wounds received at Vienna, Belgrade, Rodi, and Damascus. Hundreds of orators recounted to rapt and enthusiastic audiences the heroic deeds and brilliant victories achieved by the army fighting at a distance of three months' march from Stambul. Pasha, bey, agha, musselim, numberless dignitaries and personages of high rank, clad with theatrical display and accompanied by throngs of attendants, made their way through the crowds, who bowed before them like grain before the wind. Ambassadors representing every court in Europe, accompanied by princely retinues, who had come to Stambul to sue for peace or arrange an alliance, swept by. Caravans laden with propitiatory gifts from Asiatic and African kings filed slowly along the principal thoroughfares. Companies of *silidars* and *spahis*, haughty and insolent, swaggered by, their sabres stained with the blood of twenty different nations, while the handsome Greek and Hungarian Seraglio pages, dressed like little kings, pushed haughtily through the obsequious multitude, who, recognizing in them the unnatural caprices of their lord, respected them accordingly. Here and there a trophy of knotted clubs before some doorway indicated the presence of a corps of Janissaries, who at that time acted as police in the interior of the city. Parties of Hebrews would be seen hurrying to the Bosphorus with the dead bodies of the victims of justice. Every morning a body would be found in the Baluk Bazâr, lying with the head under the right armpit, a stone holding in place the sentence affixed to the breast. Law-breakers to whom summary justice had been meted out would dangle from a beam or hook in the public highway, while after nightfall one was liable to stumble over the body of some unfortunate who, after having his hands and feet pounded with clubs, had been thrown from the window of the torture-chamber. In the broad light of day merchants, caught in the act of cheating, would be nailed through the ear to their own shop-doors, and, there being no law controlling the free right of sepulture, the work of digging graves and burying the dead was carried on at all hours and in all places—in the gardens, in the lanes and open squares, and before the doors of dwellings. The cries of lambs and sheep could be heard from the courtyards where they were being slaughtered in sacrifice to Allah on the occasion of a circumcision or a birth. From time to time a troop of eunuchs, galloping by with warning cries, would be the signal for a general stampede; the streets would become deserted; doors and windows fly to, blinds be drawn down, and an entire neighborhood suddenly assume the look and air of a city of the dead. Then in long procession files of gorgeously-decorated coaches filled with the ladies of the imperial harem would pass by, scattering around them an atmosphere of perfume and laughter. Sometimes it would happen that an official of the court, making his way through some thoroughfare, would suddenly encounter six quite ordinary-looking individuals about to enter a shop, and at that sight grow unaccountably pale. These six, however, would be the Sultan, four officers of his court, and an executioner making their rounds from shop to shop in order to verify the weights and measures.

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Interior of Mosque of Ahmed.

Throughout the whole of the city's huge body there coursed an exuberant and feverish life; the treasury overflowed with jewels, the arsenal with arms, the barracks with soldiers, the caravanseries with strangers; the slave-market was thronged with merchants and lofty personages come to inspect the crowds of beautiful slaves. Scholars pressed to examine the archives of the great mosques; long-winded viziers prepared for the delectation of future generations the interminable annals of the Empire; poets, pensioned by the Seraglio, assembled in the baths, where they sang the imperial loves and wars; swarms of Bulgarian and Armenian workmen toiled at the erection of mighty mosques, employing huge blocks of granite and Paros marble, while by sea, columns from the temples of the Archipelago, and by land, spoils from the churches of Pesth and Ofen, were brought to contribute to their splendor. In the harbor a fleet of three hundred sail made ready to carry terror and dismay to every coast in the Mediterranean; between Stambul and Adrianapolis companies of falconers and gamekeepers, to the number of seven thousand, were stationed; and in the intervals between military uprisings at home, foreign wars, and conflagrations which would reduce twenty thousand houses to ashes in a single night, revels would be celebrated, lasting thirty days, in honor of the representatives of every court in Asia, Africa, and Europe. On these occasions the glorifications of the Mussulmans degenerated into folly: sham battles were fought by the Janissaries in the presence of the Sultan and the court, amid huge *palme di nozze* laden with birds, mirrors, and fruits of various kinds, in order to make room for which walls and houses were ruthlessly destroyed; and processions of lions and sugar mermaids, borne on horses whose trappings were of silver damask, and mountains of royal gifts sent from every part of the Empire and every court in the world; dervishes executed their furious dances, and bloody massacres of Christian prisoners were followed by public banquets where ten thousand dishes of *cuscussù* were served to the populace; trained elephants and giraffes danced in the Hippodrome, while bears and wolves, with fireworks tied to their tails, were let loose among the people; allegorical pantomimes, grotesque masquerades, wanton dances, fantastic processions, games, comedies, symbolic cars, rustic dances, followed each other in rapid succession. Little by little as night descended the festival degenerated into a mad orgy, and then the lights from five hundred brilliantly illuminated mosques spread a great aureole of fire over the entire city and announced to the watching shepherds on the mountain-heights of Asia and the wayfarers on the Propontis the revels of this new Babylon.

Such was once Stambul, a haughty sultaness, voluptuous, formidable, wanton, as compared with which the city of to-day is little more than some weary old queen, peevish and hypochondriacal.

THE ARMENIANS.

Absorbed as I was by the Turks, I had, as may be readily understood, but little time left in which to study the characteristics of the three other nationalities—Armenian, Greek, and Hebrew—which go to make up the population of Constantinople—a study requiring a certain amount of time, too, since all of these people, while preserving to a certain extent their national character, have outwardly conformed to the prevailing Mussulman coloring around them, now in its turn fading into a uniform tint of European civilization. Thus it is as difficult to catch a vivid impression of any one of the three as it would be of a view that was constantly changing. This is true in a special sense of the Armenians, "Christians in spirit and faith, Asiatic Mussulmans by birth and carnal nature," whom it is not only hard to study intimately, but even to distinguish at sight, since those among them who have not adopted the European costume dress like Turks in all except some very minor points. All of them have abandoned the ancient felt cap which was formerly, with certain special colors, the distinctive sign of their nation. In appearance they closely resemble the Turks, being for the most part tall, robust, and corpulent, with a grave, sedate carriage, but their complexion is light, and the two striking points of their national character can usually be read in their faces—the one, a quick, open, industrious, and persevering spirit, which fits them in a peculiar way to commercial enterprises; and the other that adaptability, called by some servility, which enables them to gain a foothold among whatever people they may be thrown with from Hungary to China, and

renders them particularly acceptable to the Turks, whose confidence they readily succeed in winning, making them faithful subjects and obsequious friends. There is nothing heroic or bellicose either about their appearance or disposition: formerly this may have been otherwise. Those parts of Asia whence they came are at present inhabited by a people, descendants of a common stock, who, it is said, resemble them but little. Certainly those members of the race who have been transplanted to the shores of the Bosphorus are a prudent and managing people, moderate in their manner of life, intent only upon their trade, and more sincerely religious, it is affirmed, than any other nation which inhabits Constantinople. They are called by the Turks the "camels of the Empire," and the Franks assert that every Armenian is born an accountant. These two sayings are, to a great extent justified by the facts, since, thanks to their great physical strength and their quickness and intelligence, they furnish, in addition to a large proportion of her architects, engineers, doctors, and clever and painstaking mechanics, the greater part of Constantinople's bankers and porters, the former amassing fabulous fortunes, and the latter carrying enormous loads. At first sight, though, one would hardly be aware that there was an Armenian population in Constantinople, so completely has the plant, so to speak, assumed the color of the soil. Their women, on whose account the house of the Armenian is almost as rigorously closed to strangers as that of the Mussulman, have likewise adopted the Turkish dress, and none but the most expert eye could distinguish them among their Mohammedan neighbors. They are generally fair and stout, with the aquiline Oriental profile, large eyes and long lashes; many of them are tall, with matronly figures, and, surmounted by turbans, might well be mistaken for handsome sheiks. They are universally modest and dignified in their bearing, and if anything is lacking it is the intelligence which beams from the eyes of their Greek sisters.

THE GREEKS.

Difficult as it may be to single out the Armenian at sight, there is no such trouble about the Greek, who differs so essentially in character, bearing, appearance, everything, from all the other subjects of the Empire that he can be told at once without even looking at his dress. To appreciate this diversity, or rather contrast, one need only watch a Turk and a Greek who happen to be seated beside one another on board a steamboat or in a café. They may be about the same age and rank, both dressed in the European fashion, and even resemble each other somewhat in feature, and yet it is quite impossible to mistake them. The Turk sits perfectly motionless; his face wears a look of quietude and repose, void of all expression, like a fed animal; if by any chance some shadow of a thought appears, it seems to be a reflection as lifeless and inert as his body; he looks at no one, and is apparently quite unconscious that any one is looking at him, expressing by his entire bearing an utter indifference to his surroundings, a something of the resigned melancholy of a slave and the cold pride of a despot; hard, closed, completed, he seems incapable of altering any resolution once taken, and it would drive any one to the verge of madness who should undertake the task of persuading him to any course. In short, he appears to be a being hewn out of a single block, with whom it would only be possible to live either as master or servant, and no amount of intercourse with whom would ever justify the taking of a liberty. With the Greek it is altogether different. His mobile features express every thought that passes through his mind, and betray a youthful, almost childish ardor, while he tosses his head with the free action of an uncurbed and restive horse. On finding himself observed he at once strikes an attitude, and if no one looks at him he tries to attract attention; he seems to be always wanting or imagining something, and his whole person breathes of shrewdness and ambition. There is something so attractive and sympathetic about him that you are inclined to give him your hand even when you would hesitate about trusting him with your purse. Seen side by side, one can readily understand how it is that one of these men considers the other a proud, overbearing, brutal savage, and is looked down upon in his turn as a light creature, untrustworthy, mischievous, and the cause of endless trouble, and how they mutually despise and hate one another from the bottom of their hearts, finding it impossible to live together in peace. And so with the women. It is with a distinct feeling of gratification and pleasure that one first encounters amid the handsome, florid Turkish and Armenian types, appealing more to the senses than the mind, the pure and exquisite features of the Greek women, illuminated by those deep serious eyes whose every glance recalls an ode, while their exquisite shapes inspire an immediate desire to clasp them in one's arms—with the object of placing them on pedestals, however, rather than in the harem. Among them can still be occasionally found one or two who, wearing their hair after the ancient fashion—that is, hanging over the shoulders in long wavy locks, with one thick coil wound around the top of the head like a diadem—are so noble-looking, so beautiful and classic, that they might well be taken for statues fresh from the chisel of a Praxiteles or a Lysippus, or for youthful immortals discovered after twenty centuries in some forgotten valley of Laconia or unknown island of the Egean. But even among the Greeks these examples of queenly beauty are exceedingly rare, and are found only in the ranks of the old aristocracy of the Empire, in the silent and melancholy quarter of Fanar, where the spirit of ancient Byzantium has taken refuge. There one may occasionally see one of these magnificent women leaning on the railing of a balcony or against the grating of some lofty window, her eyes fixed upon the deserted street in the attitude of an imprisoned queen; and when a crowd of lackeys is not lounging idly before the door of one of these descendants of the Palæologi and the Comneni, one may, watching her from some place of observation, fancy that a rift in the clouds has revealed for an instant the face of an Olympian goddess.

THE HEBREWS.

With regard to the Hebrews I am prepared to assert, having been to Morocco myself, that those of Constantinople have nothing in common with their fellows of the northern coast of Africa, where observing experts say they have discovered in all its primitive purity the original Oriental type of Hebrew beauty. In the hope of finding some traces of this same beauty, I summoned up all my courage and thoroughly explored the vast Ghetto of Balata, which winds like an unclean reptile along the banks of the Golden Horn. I penetrated into

the most wretched purlieus, among hovels "encrusted with mould" like the shores of the Dantesque pool; through passageways which nothing would induce me to enter again except on stilts, and, holding my nose; I peered through windows hung with filthy rags into dark, malodorous rooms; paused before damp courtyards exhaling a smell of mould and decay strong enough to take one's breath away; pushed my way through groups of scrofulous children; brushed up against horrible old men who looked as though they had died of the plague and come to life again; avoiding now a dog covered with sores, now a pool of black mud, dodging under rows of loathsome rags hung from greasy cords, or stumbling over heaps of decaying stuff whose smell was enough to make one faint outright. And, after all, my heroism met with no reward. Among all the many women whom I encountered wearing the national kalpak—an article resembling a sort of elongated turban, covering the hair and ears—I saw, it is true, some faces in which could be discovered that delicate regularity of feature and the expression of gentle resignation which are supposed to characterize the Constantinopolitan Jewess; some vague profiles of a Rebecca or a Rachel, with almond-shaped eyes full of a soft sweetness; an occasional graceful, erect figure standing in Raphaelesque attitude in an open doorway, with one delicate hand resting lightly on the curly head of a child; but for the most part my investigations revealed nothing but discouraging evidences of the degradation of the race. What a contrast between those pinched faces and the piercing eyes, brilliant coloring, and well-rounded forms which aroused my admiration a year later in the *Mellà* of Tangiers and Fez!

And the men—thin, yellow, stunted, all their vitality seems centred in their bright cunning eyes, never still for a moment, but which roll restlessly about as though constantly attracted by the sound of chinking money.

At this point I am quite prepared to hear my kind critics among the Israelites—who have already rapped me over the knuckles in regard to their co-religionists of Morocco—take up the burden of their song, laying all the blame of the degeneration and degradation of the Hebrews of Constantinople at the door of the Turkish oppressor. But it should be remembered that the other non-Mussulman subjects of the Porte are all on a precisely similar footing, both political and civil, with themselves; and, even were it otherwise, they would find some difficulty in proving that the filthy habits, early marriages, and complete abandonment of every sort of hard work, considered as primal causes of that degeneration, are the logical results of the loss of liberty and independence. And should they assert that it is not so much Turkish oppression as the universal scorn and petty persecutions which they have had to endure on all hands that have brought about such complete loss of self-respect, let them pause and first ask themselves if the exact opposite may not be nearer the truth, and the general obloquy in which they are held be not so much the cause as the result of their manner of life; and then, instead of trying to cover up the sore, themselves be the ones to apply the knife.

THE BATH.

After making the tour of Balata the most appropriate thing to take next seems to be a Turkish bath. The bath-houses may be easily recognized from without: they are small, mosque-shaped buildings, without windows, surmounted by cupolas, and have high conical chimneys, from which smoke is constantly rising. So much for the exterior, but he who desires to penetrate farther and explore the mysteries of the interior would do well to pause and ask himself, *Quid valeant humeri?* since not every one is able to endure the *aspro governo* to which he who enters those salutary walls must be subjected. I am free to confess that, after all I had been told, I approached them with some feeling of trepidation, which I think the reader will admit was not wholly unjustifiable before he has done. As I recall it all now, two great drops of perspiration stand out on my forehead, ready to roll down when I shall be in the heat of my description. Here then is what was done to my unhappy person. Entering timidly, I find myself in a large apartment which leaves one in doubt for a few moments as to whether he has gotten by mistake into a theatre or a hospital. A fountain plays in the centre, decorated on top with flowers; a wooden gallery runs all around the walls, upon which some Turks, stretched upon mattresses and enveloped from head to foot in snow-white cloths, either slumber profoundly or smoke in a dreamy state between waking and sleeping. Looking about for some attendant, I become suddenly aware of two robust mulattoes, stripped to the waist, who appear from nowhere like spectres and ask in deep tones and both together, "*Hammamun?*" (bath?). "*Evvet?*" (yes), I reply in a very weak voice. Motioning me to follow, they lead the way up a small wooden stair to a room filled with mats and cushions, where I am given to understand that I must undress, after which they proceed to wrap a strip of blue and white stuff about my loins, tie my head up in a piece of muslin, and, placing a pair of huge slippers on my feet, grasp me under the arms like a drunken man, and conduct, or rather drag, me into another room, warm and half lighted, where, after laying me on a rug, they stand with arms akimbo, waiting until my skin shall have become moist. These preparations, so distressingly suggestive of some approaching punishment, fill me with a vague uneasiness, which changes into something even less admirable when the two cutthroats, after touching me on the forehead, exchange a meaning glance, as who should say, "Suppose he resists?" and then, as though exclaiming, "To the rack!" again seize me by the arms and lead me into a third room. This apartment makes a very singular impression at first sight: it is as though one found himself in a subterranean temple, where, through clouds of vapor, high marble walls, rows of columns, arches, and a lofty vaulted roof, can be indistinctly seen, colored green and blue and crimson by the rays of light falling from the cupola, white spectral figures slide noiselessly back and forth close to the walls. In the centre half-naked forms are extended upon the pavement, while others, also half naked, bend over them in the attitude of doctors making an autopsy. The temperature is such that no sooner have we entered than I break out into a profuse perspiration, and it seems most probable that should I ever get out at all it will be in the form of a running stream like the lover of Arethusa.

The two mulattoes convey my body to the centre of the room and deposit it upon a sort of anatomical table consisting of a raised slab of white marble, beneath which are the stoves. The marble, being extremely hot, burns me and I see stars, but, as long as I am there, there is no choice but to go through with the penalty. My two attendants accordingly begin the *vivisection*, and, chanting a sort of funeral dirge the while, pinch my arms and legs, stretch my muscles, make my joints crack, pound me, rub me, maul me, and then, rolling me over on my face, begin over again, only to put me on my back later and recommence the whole process. They knead and work me like a dough figure to which they want to give a certain form they have in mind, and, not succeeding,

have grown angry with; a slight pause for breath is only followed by renewed pinching, pulling, and pounding, until I begin to fear that my last hour is drawing near; and then finally, when my entire body is streaming with perspiration like a wet sponge, the blood coursing furiously through my veins, and it has become evident that I have reached the last limit of endurance, they gather up my remains from that bed of torment and carry them to a corner, where in a small alcove are a basin and two spigots from which hot and cold water are running. But, alas! fresh martyrdom awaits me here; and really the affair at this point begins to assume so serious an aspect that, joking aside, I consider whether it would not be possible to strike out to right and left, and, just as I am, make a break for life and liberty. It is too late, though: one of my tormentors, putting on a camel's-hair glove, has fallen to rubbing my back, breast, arms, and legs with the same cheerful energy a lively groom might employ in currying a horse; after this has been prolonged for fully five minutes a stream of tepid water is poured down my back, and I take breath and return devout thanks to Heaven that it is all over at last. I soon find, however, that this is premature: that ferocious mulatto, taking the glove off, promptly falls to once more with his bare hand, until, losing all patience, I sign to him to stop, with the result that, exhibiting his hand, he proves to his own entire satisfaction and my complete bewilderment that he must still continue, and does so. Next follows another deluge of water, and after that a fresh operation: each of them, now taking a piece of tow cloth, rubs a quantity of Candia soap upon it, and then proceeds to soap me well from head to foot; then another torrent of perfumed water, followed by the tow cloths again, but, Heaven be praised! without soap this time, and the process is one of drying me off. When this has been accomplished they tie up my head again, wrap the cloth about my body, and then, enveloping me in a large sheet, reconduct me to the second room, where I am allowed to rest a few moments before being taken to the first; here a warm mattress is in readiness, upon which I stretch myself luxuriously. The two instruments of justice give a few final pinches to equalize the circulation of blood throughout all my members, and then, placing an embroidered cushion under my head, a white covering over me, a pipe in my mouth, and a glass of lemonade at my side, depart, leaving me light, fresh, airy, perfumed, with a mind serene, a contented heart, and such a sense of youth and vitality that I feel as though, like Venus, I had just been born from the foam of the sea, and seem to hear the wings of the loves fluttering above my head.

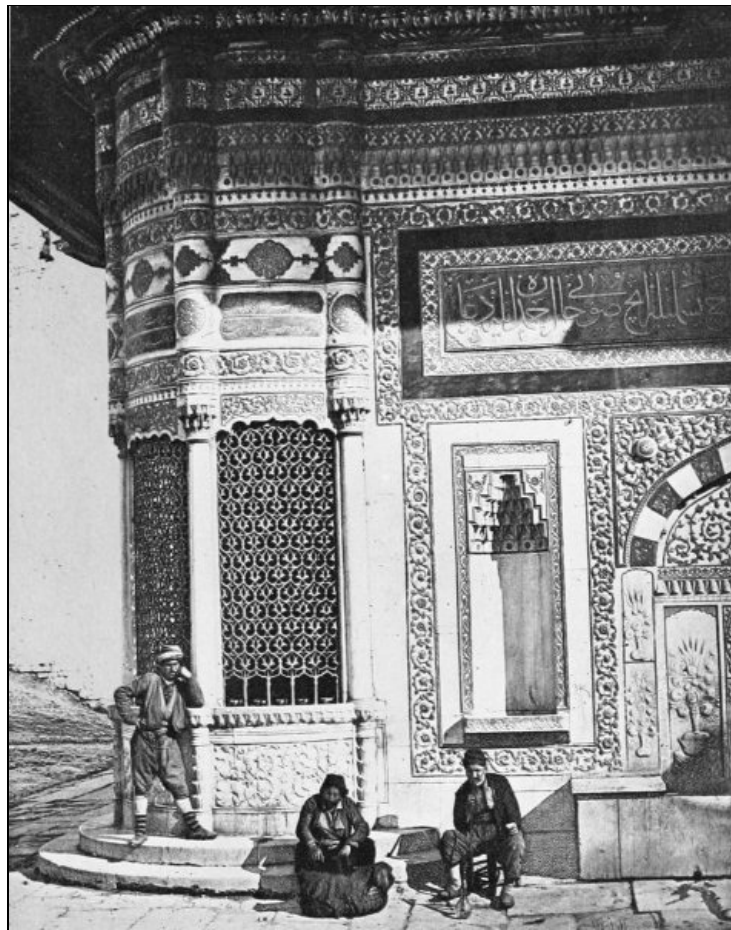
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THE SERASKER TOWER.

Feeling thus "airy and meet for intercourse with the stars," one could not do better than ascend to the top of that stone Titan called the Serasker Tower. I think that should Satan again undertake to offer a view of the kingdoms of the world by way of a temptation, his best course would be to select this spot for the enterprise. The tower, built in the reign of Mahmûd II., is planted upon the summit of the most lofty hill in Stambul, on that spot in the centre of the vast courtyard of the War Office called by the Turks the *umbilicus* of the city. It is constructed mainly of white Marmora marble, on the plan of a regular polygon with sixteen sides, and rears itself aloft, erect, and graceful as a column, overtopping to a considerable extent the gigantic minarets of the adjacent mosque of Suleiman. Ascending a winding stair lighted here and there by square windows, you catch fleeting views now of Galata, now of Stambul or the villages on the Golden Horn, and before you are halfway to the top seem already to have reached the region of the clouds. It may happen that a slight noise is heard directly over your head, and almost at the same instant a something flashes by, apparently an object of some sort being hurled headlong from above; but, in reality, one of the guards stationed day and night on the summit to watch for fires and give the alarm, who, having discovered at some distant point of the horizon a cloud of suspicious-looking smoke, is taking word to the seraskier. After mounting about two hundred steps you reach a sort of covered terrace running all around the tower and enclosed with glass, where an attendant is always at hand to serve visitors with coffee. On first finding yourself in that transparent cage, suspended as it were between heaven and earth, with nothing to be seen but an immense blue space, and the wind howling and rattling the panes of glass and making the boards strain and creak, you are very apt to be attacked with vertigo and to feel strongly tempted to give up the view; but at sight of the ladder which leads to the window in the roof courage returns, and, climbing up with a beating heart, a cry of astonishment escapes you. It is an overpowering moment, and for a little while you remain silent and transfixed.

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Entrance and Tower of Seraskier.

Constantinople lies spread out before you like a map, and with the turn of an eye the entire extent of the mighty metropolis can be embraced—all the hills and valleys of Stambul from the Castle of the Seven Towers to the cemetery of Eyûb; all Galata, all Pera, as though you could drop your sight down into them like a plumb-line; all Skutari as though it lay directly beneath you—three lines of buildings, groves, and shipping, extending as far as the eye can reach along three shores of indescribable beauty, and other stretches of garden and village winding away inland until they fade out of view in the distance; the entire length of the Golden Horn, smooth and glassy, dotted over with innumerable kâiks, which look like bright-colored flies swimming about on the surface of the water; all of the Bosphorus too, but, owing to the hills which run out into it here and there, it looks like a series of lakes, and each lake seems to be surrounded by a city, and each city festooned about with gardens: beyond the Bosphorus lies the Black Sea, whose blue surface melts into the sky; in the opposite direction are the Sea of Marmora, the Gulf of Nicomedia [Ismid], the Isles of the Princes, and the two coasts of Asia and Europe, white with villages; beyond the Sea of Marmora lie the Dardanelles, shining like a silver ribbon, and beyond them again a dazzling white light indicates the Ægean Sea, with a dark line showing the position of the Troad; beyond Skutari are seen Bithynia and the Olympus; beyond Stambul the brown undulating solitudes of Thrace; two gulfs, two straits, two continents, three seas, twenty cities, myriads of silver cupolas with gilded pinnacles, a glory of light, an exuberance of color, until you doubt whether it is indeed your own planet spread out before you or some other heavenly body more highly favored by God.

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CONSTANTINOPLE.

And so on the Serasker Tower I asked myself, as I had already done over and over again on the old bridge, the Tower of Galata, at Skutari, how I could ever have been so infatuated with Holland; and not only did Holland now seem a poor dull place which one would tire of in a month, but Paris, Madrid, Seville as well. And then I would think miserably of my wretched descriptions—how often I had used the expressions superb, beautiful, magnificent, until now there were none left for this surpassing view; and yet at the same time I knew I would never be willing to subtract a syllable from what I had said about those other parts of Constantinople. My friend Rossasco would say, "Well, why don't you try this?" To which I would reply, "But suppose I have nothing to say?" And indeed, incredible as it sounds, there really were times when, in certain lights and at certain hours of the day, the view did look almost poor, and I would exclaim in dismay, "What has become of my beloved Constantinople?" At others I would experience a feeling of sadness to think that while I had that immensity of space, that prodigality of beauty, spread out before me for the asking, my mother was sitting in a little room from which nothing could be seen but a dull courtyard and narrow strip of sky, as though I must somehow be to blame; and feel that I would give an eye to have my dear old lady on my arm and carry her off to see St. Sophia. As a rule, however, the days flew by as lightly and gayly as the hours at a feast, and when, by any chance, my friend and I were attacked by ill-humor, we had a sure and certain method of curing ourselves. Going to Galata, we would jump into the two most gayly-decorated two-oared kâiks at the landing, and, calling out, "Eyûb!" presto, before we knew it, would find ourselves in the middle of the Golden Horn. The oarsmen, Mahmûds or

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Bayezids or Ibrahims, about twenty years old or so, and endowed with arms of iron, would usually amuse themselves by racing, keeping up a series of shouts and cries and laughing like children. Above, a cloudless sky, below a smooth transparent sea; throwing back our heads, we would inhale great breaths of the delicious scented air, and trail one hand over the side in the soft clear water. On fly the two kâiks; palaces, gardens, kiosks, and mosques glide by; we seem to be borne on the wings of the wind across an enchanted world, and are blissfully conscious that we are young and at Stambul. Yunk sings, and I, while reciting half aloud some one of Victor Hugo's ballads of the East, can see now on the right hand and now on the left, near by, afar off, a beloved face crowned with white hair which wears a tender smile and tells me, as plainly as though it were a voice speaking, that she appreciates and fully shares all my enjoyment.

ST. SOPHIA.

And now, if even a poor writer of travels may be allowed to invoke his Muse, I do most certainly invoke mine with bent knee and clasped hands, for, verily my mind grows bewildered, "*in faccia al nobile subbietto*," and the majestic outlines of the great Byzantine basilica tremble before my vision like images reflected in the water. May the Muse inspire me, St. Sophia illumine me, and the emperor Justinian pardon me!

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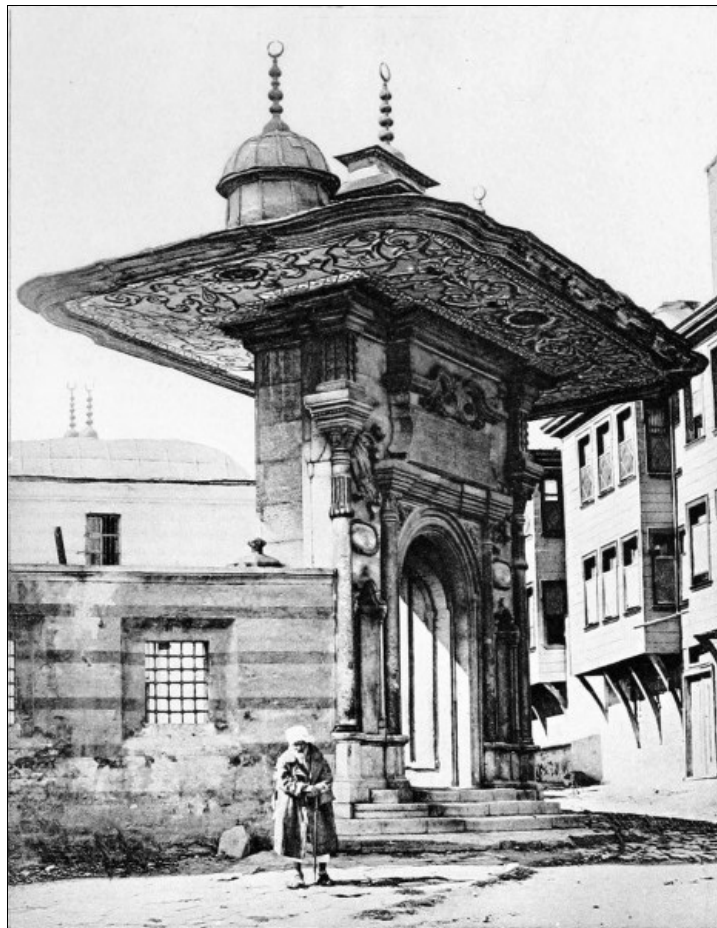
Entrance to St. Sophia.

It was a fine morning in October when we at last set forth, accompanied by a Turkish *cavas* from the Italian consulate and a Greek dragoman, to visit the terrestrial Paradise, second firmament, car of the cherubim, throne of the glory of God, wonder of the world, the greatest temple on earth after St. Peter's. This last expression, as my friends of Burgos, Cologne, Milan, and Florence must know, is of course not my own, nor would I ever dare to make it so: I merely quote it among the rest as one of the many terms consecrated by the enthusiasm of the Greeks which our dragoman repeated to us as we passed along the streets. We had purposely supplemented him by the old Turkish *cavas* in the hope—and we were not disappointed—that their two accounts might bring vividly before us the struggle between the two religions, histories, and nations, the legends and explanations of one magnifying the Church, those of the other the Mosque, in such a manner as to make us see St. Sophia as she should be seen; that is to say, with one eye Christian and the other Turkish.

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My expectations were very great and my curiosity was all on fire, and yet I realized then, as I do now, that the actual sight of a world-renowned object, no matter how fully it may justify its reputation, never quite comes up to the keen enjoyment one experiences when on his way to see it. If I could live over again one hour out of each of those days on which I saw some great sight for the first time, I would unhesitatingly choose the one which intervenes between the moment of saying, "Now let us start," and that in which the goal is reached. Those are the traveller's most blissful hours. As you walk along you can feel your soul expand, preparing, as it were, to receive the streams of enthusiasm and delight soon to well up in it. You recall your boyhood's dreams, which then seemed so hopelessly far from realization; you remember how a certain old professor of geography, after pointing out Constantinople on the map of Europe, traced the outline of the great basilica in the air, a pinch of snuff between his thumb and fore finger; you see that room, that hearth, in front of which, during the coming winter, you will describe to a circle of wondering and attentive faces the famous building; you hear that name, St. Sophia, ringing in your head, your heart, your ears like the voice of a living person who calls, and awaits your coming to reveal some mighty secret: you see above your head dim, prodigious outlines of arch and pilaster and column, mighty buildings which reach to the heavens, and when, at last, but a few steps more are wanted to bring you face to face with the reality, you linger to examine a pebble, watch the passage of a lizard, tell some trifling anecdote—anything that may serve to postpone, if but for a few seconds, that moment to which for twenty years you have been looking forward, and which you will remember for the rest of your life. And, truly, if you take away what goes before and what follows after, not so very much remains of the much-talked-of joys of seeing and admiring. It is almost always a delusion, followed by a slight awakening, after which we obstinately delude ourselves again.

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Fountain of Ahmed.

The mosque of St. Sophia stands opposite the main entrance of the old Seraglio. On reaching, however, the open square which lies between the two, the first object to attract attention is, not the mosque, but the famous fountain of Sultan Ahmed III., one of the richest and most characteristic examples of Turkish art. This exquisite little building is not so much a monument as a caress in marble imprinted in a moment of passionate adoration by an enamored sultan upon the forehead of his beloved Stambul. I doubt if any but a woman's pen can do it justice: mine, I feel convinced, is far too coarse and heavy to trace those delicate outlines. At first sight it hardly looks like a fountain at all, being in the form of a little square temple with a Chinese roof, whose undulating rim extends for some distance beyond the walls, and lends to the whole something of the character of a pagoda. At each corner rises a round tower furnished with small screened windows, or, rather, they are more like four charming kiosks, corresponding to the graceful cupolas on the roof which encircle the main central cupola. In each of the four walls are two niches, flanking a pointed arch, beneath which the water flows from a spout into a small basin. Around the edifice there runs an inscription which reads as follows: "This fountain speaks to you in the following verse by Sultan Ahmed: Turn the key of this pure and tranquil spring and call upon the name of God; drink of these inexhaustible and limpid waters and pray for the Sultan." The little building is composed entirely of white marble, which, however, is almost hidden beneath the mass of ornamentation with which its walls are covered—arches, niches, tiny columns, roses, polygons, garlands, fretwork, gilding on a background of blue. Carving around the cupolas, inlaid-work below the roof, mosaics of a hundred different combinations of color, arabesques of every conceivable form,—all seem to vie with one another to attract attention and arouse admiration, until one's powers of seeing and admiring are well-nigh exhausted. Not so much as a hand's breadth of space is left free from carving, painting, gilding, or ornament of some sort. It is a prodigy of richness, beauty, and patience, which should, by rights, be preserved under a glass case; and, as though it were too perfect to delight but one sense alone, you are tempted to break off a piece and put it in your mouth, feeling that it must taste good as well—a casket designed, as one would suppose, to guard some priceless treasure, and you long to open it and find the—what? Infant goddess, magic ring, or fabulous pearl. Time has to some extent faded the brilliant colors, dimmed the gilding, and darkened the marble; think, then, what this colossal jewel must have been when first unveiled, all fresh and sparkling, before the eyes of the Solomon of the Bosphorus a hundred and sixty years ago! But, old and faded as it is, it undoubtedly occupies the first place among the lesser wonders of Constantinople, and is, moreover, an object so distinctively Turkish that, once seen, it claims a prominent position among that certain number of others which will dwell for ever in one's memory, ready to rise up at the sound of the word "Stambul;" the background for all time against which will be thrown out one's dreams and visions of the Orient.

Looking across from the fountain, St. Sophia can be seen occupying one side of the intervening square. About the exterior there is nothing especially noteworthy. The only points which attract the eye are the lofty white minarets, which rise at the four corners from pedestals each the size of a house. The celebrated dome looks small, and it seems impossible that this can be the same as that which we are wont to see, from the Bosphorus and Sea of Marmora and the hillsides of Asia, rearing its mighty form like the head of some Titan against the blue heavens. It is a flattened dome overlaid with lead, flanked by two semi-domes, and pierced at the base by a row of small windows. The four walls which support it are painted in broad bands of white and red and strengthened by enormous masses of masonry. A number of mean-looking buildings, baths, schools,

hospitals, mausoleums, and soup-kitchens, crowd around the base and effectually conceal the ancient architectural form of the basilica. Nothing can be seen but a heavy, irregular edifice, faded and bare as a fortress, and apparently totally inadequate to embrace the mighty expanse of St. Sophia's great nave. Of the original basilica only the dome is visible, and even that has been despoiled of the silver splendor which, according to the Greeks, could once be seen from the summit of the Olympus. All the rest is Mussulman: one minaret was erected by Muhammad the Conqueror, another by Selim II., the two others by the Third Murad, the same who toward the close of the sixteenth century added the buttresses to strengthen the walls shaken by an earthquake, and placed the huge bronze crescent on the summit of the dome, the gilding alone of which cost fifty thousand ducats. The ancient atrium has disappeared, and the baptistry has been converted into a mausoleum where are interred the remains of Mustafa I. and Ibrahim, while nearly every one of the other small buildings which adjoined the Greek church have been either destroyed outright or else, by the erection of new walls or some other alteration, changed past recognition: on all sides the mosque crowds, pushes, and bears down upon the church, of which the head alone remains free, and even around that the imperial minarets mount guard like four gigantic sentinels. On the east side there is a doorway flanked by six marble and porphyry columns; another on the south leads into a courtyard surrounded by low, irregular buildings, in the midst of which a fountain for ablutions plays beneath a little arched canopy supported on eight, small columns. Viewed from the outside, there is nothing to distinguish St. Sophia from the other great mosques of Stambul, except that it is heavier and dingier; far less would it ever enter one's head to name it "the greatest temple on earth after St. Peter's."

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Mosque of St. Sophia.

Our guides conducted us by a narrow street skirting the northern wall of the edifice to a bronze door, which, swinging slowly back on its hinges, admitted us to the eso-narthex. This is a very long and lofty hall lined with marbles, and still glowing here and there with ancient mosaics. Nine doors on the eastern side give access to the body of the church, opposite which five others formerly led to the exo-narthex, which, in turn, communicated by thirteen doors with the atrium. We had barely crossed the threshold when a turbaned sacristan demanded our firmans, and then, after donning slippers, at a sign from the guides we approached the middle door on the eastern side, which stood half open to receive us. The first effect is certainly quite overpowering, and for some moments we remained stunned and speechless. In a single glance one is confronted by an enormous space and a bold architecture of semi-domes which seem to hang suspended in the air, enormous pilasters, mighty arches, gigantic columns, galleries, tribunes, arcades, over which floods of light are poured from a thousand great windows—a something I hardly know how to define of theatrical and regal rather than sacred; an ostentation of size and strength; a look of worldly pomp; a mixture of the classic, barbarous, fanciful, arrogant, and magnificent; a stupendous harmony in which, with the formidable and thunderous notes of the pilasters and cyclopean arches, recalling the cathedrals of the North, there mingle soft, subdued strains of some Oriental air, the noisy music of the revels of Justinian and Heraclitus, echoes of pagan chants, the choked voice of an effeminate and wornout race, and distant cries of Goth, of Vandal, and of Avar; a mighty defaced majesty, a sinister nakedness, a profound peace—St. Peter's shrunken and plastered over, St. Mark's enlarged and abandoned; a quite indescribable mingling of church, mosque, and temple, severe in aspect, puerile in adornment—of things old and new, faded colors, and curious, unfamiliar accessories: a sight, in short, so bewildering, so awe-inspiring, and at the same time so full of melancholy, that for a time the mind cannot grasp its full meaning, but gropes about uncertainly, trying to find first what it is, and then words in which to express it.

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The plan of the edifice nearly approaches an equilateral rectangle, over the centre of which rises the great dome, supported on four mighty arches resting upon massive pilasters: these form, as it were, the skeleton of the entire building. From the arches on the right and left of the entrance there rise, before and beyond the great dome, two semi-domes, the three covering the entire nave, these semi-domes have six exedrae, of which

the four on the sides are also covered with semi-domes, making four small circular temples enclosed in the large one. Between the two exedrae at the east end of the building is the apse, which projects beyond the external wall, and is likewise covered with a domed roof. Thus seven semi-domes encircle the main one, two just beyond it and five more beyond these, all of them without any apparent support, and presenting an extraordinary impression of lightness, as though they actually were, as a Greek poet once said, suspended by seven cords from the roof of the sky. All these domes are lighted by large windows arched and symmetrical. Between the four great pilasters, which form a square in the centre of the basilica, there rise to the right and left of the entrance eight wonderful columns of green marble, from which spring graceful arches richly carved with foliage, forming charming porticos on either side of the nave, and supporting at a great height two vast galleries, where are to be seen two other lines of columns and sculptured arches. A third gallery, communicating with the first two, runs above the narthex, and opens out on the nave by means of three enormous arches supported on double columns. Other smaller galleries, resting upon porphyry columns, intersect the four small temples at the extremities of the nave, and from them rise other columns supporting tribunes.

Such is the basilica. The mosque is, so to speak, spread over its surface and hung upon its walls. The *mihrab*—that is, the niche which indicates the direction in which Mecca lies—is hollowed out of one of the pilasters of the apse; to the right of it, high up on the wall, hangs one of the four prayer-carpets of the Prophet. In the angle of the apse nearest to the *mihrab*, reached by a steep little flight of stairs whose marble balustrade is carved with the most marvellous delicacy of workmanship, is the pulpit, surmounted by a queer conical roof and hung on either side with victorious banners of Muhammad II. Here the *rhatib* ascends to read the Koran,^H and carries in his hand a drawn simeter, to signify that St. Sophia is a mosque acquired by the force of arms. Opposite the pulpit is the Sultan's tribune enclosed within a gilded grating. Other pulpits or species of balconies, having railings of open-work carving, and supported on small marble columns and arabesqued arches, protrude here and there along the walls or toward the centre of the nave. On either side of the entrance stand two huge alabaster jars, found among the ruins of Pergamum and brought to Constantinople by Murad III. Enormous green disks, bearing inscriptions from the Koran^I in letters of gold, are hung below the pendentives, beneath which great mural slabs of porphyry bear the names of Allah, Mohammed, and the first four khalifs. In the pendentives may still be seen the gigantic wings of the four mosaic seraphim, whose faces are now concealed beneath golden roses. From the roofs of the domes hang innumerable silken cords, measuring almost the entire height of the building, from which are suspended ostrich eggs, lamps of wrought bronze, and crystal globes. Here and there stand cassia-wood reading-desks, inlaid with copper and mother-of-pearl, on which lie manuscript copies of the Koran. On the pavement are spread great numbers of rugs and mats. The walls are bare, whitish, yellowish, gray, still adorned in some places with discolored mosaics. The general aspect is inexpressibly mournful.

^H This pulpit is the *minbir*, used only on Friday, and then by the *rhatib* to read a prayer for the Sultan, Khalif, and Islam.—TRANS.

^I The names of Allah, the Prophet, and four khalifs mentioned below are on these green disks, not verses from the Koran.—TRANS.



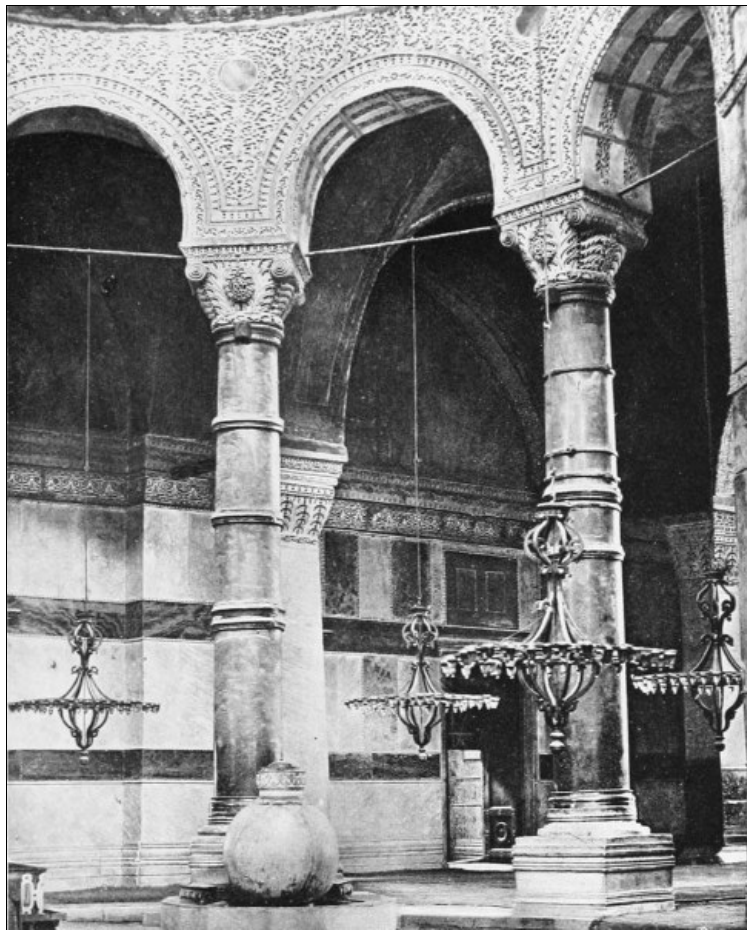
Interior of the Mosque of St. Sophia.

The great marvel of the mosque is the central dome. Gazing up at it from the middle of the nave, it truly seems, as Mme. de Staël said of the dome of St. Peter's, as though a vast abyss were suspended over one's head. It is very lofty, with an enormous circumference, and is made to appear still larger from the fact that its

depth is but one-sixth of its diameter.^J Around its base runs a small gallery, above which are a row of forty arched windows, and around the crown are inscribed the words pronounced by Muhammad II. when he drew his horse up opposite the high altar on the day of the conquest of Constantinople: "Allah is the light of heaven and earth." These letters, white on a dark background, are some of them more than twenty-seven feet long. As is well known, this aërial prodigy could never have been constructed had ordinary materials been employed. The roofs were built of pumice-stone, which floats on the surface of water, and of bricks from the Isle of Rhodes, five of which hardly weigh as much as one ordinary brick; on each of them was inscribed the sentence from David, "*Deus in medio eius non commovebitur. Adiuva-bit eam Deus vultu suo,*" and with every twelfth row relics of various saints were walled in. During the progress of the building operations the priests chanted and Justinian attended in person clad in a coarse linen tunic, while immense crowds looked on in admiration; and this is hardly to be wondered at when we consider that the construction of this "second firmament," which even at the present time is an object of wonder, was an undertaking without parallel in the sixth century. The common people believed it to be the result of magic, and the Turks must have had much ado for a long period after the conquest to keep their gaze fixed upon the east when praying in St. Sophia, instead of resting it upon that "stone heaven" above their heads. The dome covers, indeed, nearly half the nave, in such a manner as to light up and dominate the entire edifice: it can be seen, at least in part, from every point, and, wander where you will, you invariably bring up beneath it to find your gaze attracted for the hundredth time to that immeasurable space, where eye and mind float with ecstatic delight as though borne on wings. 261

^J This is a mistake: the great dome of St. Sophia is 107 feet across by 46 in height. (See Fergusson, *Hist. Architecture*.)—TRANS. 262

After inspecting the nave and dome one has but just begun to see St. Sophia. Whoever takes the least shadow, for example, of historical interest in the building could spend an hour over the columns alone. Here may be found spoils from every temple in the world. The four columns of green marble supporting the large galleries were presented to Justinian by the magistrates of Ephesus, having formerly stood in the temple of Diana, which was burned by Herostratus. The eight porphyry columns which stand two and two between the pilasters were a part of the temple of the Sun at Baalbek, and were carried thence by Aurelian to Rome. Others are from the temple of Jupiter at Cyzicus and of Helios at Palmyra—from the temples of Thebes, of Athens, of Rome, of the Troad, the Cyclades, and from Alexandria: altogether, they present an endless variety of style, form size, and color. What between the columns, the railings and pedestals, and the portions of the ancient covering of the walls which still remain, there are marbles from every quarry of the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Africa, and Gaul: the white Bosphorus marble speckled with black contrasts with the black Celtic veined with white; the green marble of Laconia is reflected in the blue Libyan, while the Egyptian spotted porphyry, starred granite of Thessaly, the red-and-white striped stone of Mt. Jassey, and pale *caristio* streaked with iron, mingle their colors with the purple Phrygian, red Synadian, gold of the Mauritius, and snow-white marble of Paros. Added to this wealth of color is the indescribable variety of form, as seen in the friezes, the cornices, roses, and balustrades, and odd Corinthian capitals carved with foliage, crosses, animals, and strange chimerical figures, all interlaced: others, again, belong to no order in especial, of curious design and unequal size, evidently coupled together by chance—shafts of columns, pedestals ornamented with strange sculptures, injured by time and mutilated by sabre-cuts,—altogether an effect of wild and barbarous magnificence which, while it outrages the rules of good taste, attracts the eye with an irresistible fascination. 263



First Columns Erected in St. Sophia.

From the nave one hardly appreciates the vast size of the building, of which it indeed forms but a comparatively small part. The two aisles beneath the large galleries are in themselves two large edifices, out of either one of which a separate temple might be formed. Each of these is divided in three and separated by large vaulted openings. Indeed, everything here, column, architrave, pilaster, roof, is gigantic. Passing beneath these arches, you can barely see the nave from between the columns of the Ephesian temple, and seem almost to be in another basilica: the same effect is produced from the galleries, reached by a winding stair with very gentle gradations, or rather it is an inclined plane, for there are two steps, and one might readily ascend it on horseback. The galleries were used as gynæconitis; that is, those parts of the church reserved for women: penitents remained without in the eso-narthex, while the mass of the faithful occupied the nave. Each one of these galleries is capable of accommodating the entire population of a suburb of Constantinople. You no longer feel as though you were in a church, but rather walking in the foyer of some Titanic theatre, expecting at any moment to hear the sudden outburst of a chorus sung by a hundred thousand voices. In order to realize the immense size and obtain a really good view of the mosque one must lean well over the railing of the gallery and look around. Arches, roofs, pilasters, have all swelled to gigantic proportions. The green disks which, seen from below, appear to measure about the length of a man's arm, are now large enough to cover a house. The windows look like portes-cochères of palaces, the seraphim wings like the spread sails of a vessel, the tribunals like vast open squares; while it makes one's head swim to look up at the dome at all. Casting the eyes below, one is taken aback to find how high he has mounted: the pavement of the nave is far away at the bottom of an abyss, while the pulpits, jars from Pergamum, mats, and lamps seem to have shrunk in the most extraordinary manner. One rather curious circumstance about the mosque of St. Sophia is particularly noticeable from this elevated position: the nave not being precisely in line with Mecca, toward which it is incumbent upon every good Mussulman to turn while praying, all the mats and strips of carpet are placed obliquely with the lines of the building, and produce upon the eye the same disagreeable effect as though there were some gross defect in the perspective. From there, too, one is enabled to see and observe all the life of the mosque. Turks are kneeling upon the mats with foreheads touching the pavement; others stand erect and motionless as statues, with hands held before their faces, as though interrogating their palms; some are seated cross-legged at the foot of a pilaster, much as they would rest beneath the shade of a tree; veiled women kneel in a distant corner; old men seated before the lecterns read from the Koran; an *iman* is hearing a group of boys recite sacred verses; and here and there beneath distant arches and through the galleries the forms of *rhatib*, *iman*, or *muezzin* and various other functionaries of the mosque glide noiselessly back and forth, as though their feet hardly touched the ground, clad in strange, unfamiliar costumes, while the vague, subdued murmur of those who pray and those who read, that clear, steady light, the thousand odd-looking lamps, the deserted apse and echoing galleries, the immensity of it all, the past associations and present peacefulness,—combine to produce such an impression of greatness and of mystery as neither words can express nor time efface.

But the dominating sensation, as I have already said, is one of sadness, and that great poet who compared St. Sophia to a "colossal sepulchre" was not far wrong. On all sides you see the signs of a barbarous devastation, and experience more melancholy in the thought of what has been than pleasure in contemplating what still remains. After the first feelings of amazement have to some extent subsided, one's mind turns intuitively to the past. And even now, after a lapse of three years, I can never think of the great mosque without

trying to imagine the church. Overthrow the pulpits of the Mussulman, remove the lamps and jars, cut down the disks and tear away the porphyry slabs, reopen the doors and windows that have been bricked up, scrape away the plaster which covers wall and roof, and, behold! the basilica whole and new as it appeared on that day, thirteen centuries ago, when Justinian exclaimed, "*Glory be to God, who has judged me worthy to perform this mighty work! O Solomon, I have surpassed thee!*" Every object upon which the eye rests shines or glitters or flashes like the enchanted palaces in a fairy tale. The enormous walls, once more covered with precious marbles, send back reflections of gold, ivory, steel, coral, and mother-of-pearl; the markings and veins of the marble look like coronets or garlands of flowers; wherever a ray of sunlight chances to fall upon those walls, all encrusted with crystal mosaics, they flash and sparkle as though set with diamonds; the capitals, entablatures, doors, and friezes of the arches are all of gilded bronze; the roofs of aisle and gallery are covered with angelic forms and figures of saints painted upon a golden background; before the pilasters in the chapels, beside the doors, between the columns, stand marble and bronze statues and enormous candelabra of solid gold; superb copies of the Gospels lie upon lecterns adorned like kings' thrones; lofty ivory crosses and vases encrusted with pearls stand upon the altars. The extremity of the nave is nothing but one blaze of light from a mass of glittering objects: here is the gilded bronze balustrade of the choir, the pulpit overlaid with forty thousand pounds of silver—the Egyptian tribute for a whole year; the seats of the seven priests, the Patriarch's throne, and that of the emperor gilded, carved, inlaid, set with pearls, so that when the sun shines full upon them one is forced to avert the eye. Beyond all these splendors in the apse a still more vivid blaze is seen proceeding from the altar itself, the table of which, supported upon four gold pillars, is composed of a fusion of silver, gold, lead, and pearls; above it rises the ciborium, formed of four pillars of pure silver supporting a massive gold cupola, surmounted by a globe and by a cross also of gold weighing two hundred and sixty pounds.^K Beyond the altar is seen the gigantic image of Holy Wisdom, whose feet touch the pavement and head the roof of the apse. High over all this magnificence shine and glisten the seven semi-domes overlaid with mosaics of crystal and gold, and the mighty central dome covered with figures of apostle and evangelist, the Virgin and the cross, all colored, gilded, and brilliant like a roof of jewels and flowers. And dome and pillar, statue and candelabra, each and every gorgeous object, is repeated in the immense mirror of the pavement, whose polished marbles are joined together in undulating lines, which, seen from the four main entrances, have the effect of four majestic rivers ruffled by the wind. But we must not forget the atrium—surrounded by columns, and walls covered with mosaics—in which stood marble fountains and equestrian statues; and the thirty-two towers whose bells made so formidable a clamor that they could be heard throughout the seven hills; or the hundred bronze doors decorated with bas-reliefs and inscriptions in silver; or the hall of the synod; the imperial apartments; the sacerdotal prisons; the baptistry; the vast sacristies overflowing with treasure; and a labyrinth of vestibules, tricliniums, corridors, and secret stairways built in the walls and leading to tribunals and hidden oratories.

^K Some authorities give the weight of this cross as seventy-five pounds.—TRANS.

And now let us in fancy attend some great state function—an imperial marriage, a council, a coronation. From the enormous palace of the Cæsars the glittering procession sweeps forth through streets flanked by thousands of columns, perfumed with myrrh, and spread with flowers and myrtle. The houses on either side are decorated with precious vases and silken hangings. Two bands, the one of *azzurri*, the other *verdi*, precede the cortège, which advances amid the songs of poets and noise of the heralds shouting vivas in all the tongues of the empire, and there, seated like an idol laden with pearls in a golden car with purple hangings, and drawn by two white mules, the emperor appears, wearing the tiara surmounted by a cross, and surrounded with all the pomp of a Persian monarch. The haughty ecclesiastics advance to the atrium to receive him, and all that throng of courtiers, attendants, place-seekers, sycophants, lord high constables, chief eunuchs, master-thieves, corrupt magistrates, spurious patricians, cowardly senators, slaves, buffoons, casuists, mercenaries, adventurers from every land, the entire glittering rabble of gilded offscourings, pours through the twenty-seven doors and into the huge nave lit up by six thousand candelabras. Then along the choir-rail and beneath arcade and tribune there is a coming and going; a movement and mingling of bared heads and purple cloaks; a waving of jewelled plumes and velvet caps; the glitter of golden chains and silver breastplates; an interchange of ceremonious greetings and courtly salutations; the constant rustle and sweep of silken garments and rattle of jewelled hilts; while soft perfumes load the air and the vast servile throng makes the sacred edifice ring again with shouts of admiration and profane applause.

After making the circuit of the mosque several times in silence, we gave our guides permission to talk. They commenced by showing us the chapels built beneath the galleries, now, like the rest of the basilica, despoiled of everything of value: some of them, like the *opisthodomus* of the Parthenon, serve as treasuries, where Turks who are about to start on long journeys deposit their money and other valuables to be secure from robbery, sometimes leaving their possessions there, under the protection of Allah, for years at a time; others have been closed up and are used either as infirmaries for the sick, where they lie awaiting death or recovery, or else places of confinement for the insane, whose melancholy cries or bursts of wild laughter awaken from time to time the echoes of the vast building.

We were now reconducted to the centre of the nave, and the Greek dragoman began to recount the marvels of the basilica. The design, it is quite true, was sketched by the two architects, Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus, but the first conception came to them through angelic inspiration; it was also an angel who suggested to Justinian the idea of opening the three windows in the apse to represent the three Persons of the Trinity; in the same way the hundred and seven columns of the church stand for the hundred and seven pillars which support the House of Wisdom. It took seven years merely to collect the necessary materials for constructing the edifice, while a hundred master-builders were employed to overlook the ten thousand workmen, five thousand on one side and five thousand on the other, who labored at its erection. When the walls had risen to the height of but a few hands only from the ground more than four hundred and fifty quintals of gold had already been expended. The outlay for the building alone amounted to twenty-five million francs. The church was consecrated by the Patriarch five years eleven months and ten days after the first stone was laid,

and Justinian celebrated the occasion by feasts and sacrifices and distributions of money and food which were prolonged for two weeks.

At this point the Turkish *cavas* interrupted in order to call our attention to the pilaster upon which Muhammad II. left the bloody imprint of his right hand on the day of his victorious entrance, as though to seal his conquest; he then pointed out the so-called "cold window," near the mihrab, through which a perpetual current of cool air inspires the most eloquent discourses from the greatest orators of Islamism. He next showed us, close by another window, the famous "shining stone," a slab of transparent marble which gleams like crystal when struck by the sun's rays, and made us touch the "sweating column," on the left of the north entrance. This column is overlaid with bronze, through a crack in which the stone can be seen covered with moisture. And finally he showed us a block of hollowed-out marble, brought from Bethlehem, in which, it is said, was placed immediately after his birth Sidi Yssa, "the Son of Mary, apostle of, and Spirit proceeding out from, God, worthy of all honor both in this world and the next." But it struck me that neither Turk nor Greek placed very much faith in this relic. 272

The Greek now took up his parable, and led us by a certain walled-up doorway in the gallery, in order to recount the celebrated legend of the Greek bishop; and now his manner was one of such entire belief that, if it was not sincere, it was certainly wonderfully well feigned. It seems that at the very moment when the Turks burst into the church of St. Sophia a bishop was in the act of celebrating mass at the high altar. Leaving the altar at sight of the invaders, he ascended to one of the galleries, where some Turks, following in hot pursuit, saw him disappear within this little door, which was instantly closed up by a stone wall. Throwing themselves against it, the soldiers tried with all their force to break it down, hammering and pounding furiously against the stones, but with no other result than to leave the marks of their weapons upon the wall. Masons were sent for, who worked an entire day with pickaxes and crowbars, finally abandoning the attempt: after them every mason in Constantinople tried in turn to effect an opening, but one and all failed to make any impression upon the miraculous wall, which has remained closed ever since. On that day, however, when the profaned basilica shall be restored to the worship of Christ the wall will open of its own accord, and the bishop will come forth, wearing his episcopal robes, and, chalice in hand, his face illumined as with a celestial vision, will mount the steps of the altar and resume the mass at the very point where he left off centuries ago; and then will be the dawn of a new era for the city of Constantine. 273

As we were about leaving the building the Turkish sacristan, who had followed us all about, lounging and yawning, gave us a handful of bits of mosaic, which he had dug out of a wall shortly before, and the dragoman, whom this incident had interrupted as he was about to launch forth into the account of the profanation of St. Sophia, resumed his recital. 274

I certainly hope, however, that no one will interrupt me, now that the whole scene has been brought so vividly before me by this description of the building.

Hardly had the report been noised abroad throughout Constantinople, at about seven in the morning, that the Turks had actually scaled the walls, than an immense throng of people rushed to St. Sophia for refuge. There were about a hundred thousand persons in all—renegade soldiers, monks, priests, senators, thousands of virgins from the convents, members of patrician families laden with their treasures, high state dignitaries, and princes of the imperial blood,—all pouring through nave and gallery and arcade, treading upon one another in every recess of the huge building, and mingling in one inextricable mass with the dregs of the population, slaves, and malefactors escaped from the prisons and galleys. The mighty basilica resounded with shrieks of terror such as are heard in a theatre at the outbreak of fire. When every nook and corner, gallery and chapel, was filled to overflowing, the doors were shut to and securely bolted, and the wild uproar of the first few moments gave place to a terror-stricken silence. Many still believed that the victors would not dare to violate the sanctity of St. Sophia; others awaited with a stubborn sense of security the appearance of the angel foretold by the prophets who was to annihilate the Turkish army before the advance-guard should have reached the Column of Constantine; others, again, had ascended to the gallery running around the interior of the dome, from whose windows they could watch the movements of the enemy and impart their intelligence by signs to the hundred thousand strained and ashy faces turned up to them from the nave and galleries below. An immense white mass could be seen covering the city-walls from the Blachernæ to the Golden Gate, from which four shining bands were seen to detach themselves and advance between the houses like four torrents of lava, increasing in volume and noise and leaving behind them a track of smoke and flame. These were the four attacking columns of the Turkish army driving before them the disorganized remainder of the Greek forces, and burning and plundering as they came, converging toward St. Sophia, the Hippodrome, and the imperial palace. As the advance-guard reached the second hill the blare of their trumpets suddenly smote upon the ears of the terrified throng in the basilica, who fell upon their knees in agonized supplication; but even then there were many who still looked for the angel to appear, and others who clung to the hope that a feeling of awe at the vastness and majesty of that building, dedicated to the worship of God, might hold the invaders in check. But even this last illusion was soon dispelled. Through the thousand windows there broke on their ears a confused roar of human voices mingled with the clashing of arms and shrill blare of trumpets, and a moment later the first blows of the Ottoman sabres fell upon the bronze doors of the vestibule and resounded throughout the entire building, sounding the death-knell of the listening multitude, who, feeling the chill breath of the grave blow upon them, abandoned hope and recommended their souls to the mercy of God. Before long the doors were battered in or struck from their hinges, and a savage horde of janissaries, spahis, *timmarioti*, dervishes, and sciaus, covered with dust and blood, their faces contorted with the fury of battle, rapine, and murder, appeared in the openings. At sight of the enormous nave, glittering with gold and precious stones, they sent up a great shout of astonishment and joy, and, pouring in like a furious torrent, abandoned themselves to the work of pillage and destruction. Some busied themselves at once in securing the women and virgins, valuable booty for the slave-market, who, stupefied with terror, offered no resistance, but voluntarily held out their arms for the chains. Others attacked the rich furnishings of the church: tabernacles were violated, images overthrown, ivory crucifixes trodden under foot, while the mosaics, mistaken for precious stones, fell under the blows of the cimeters in glittering showers into the cloaks and caftans held open to receive them; pearls, detached from their 275
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settings with sabre-points, rolled about over the pavement, chased like living creatures and fought over with savage kicks and blows. The high altar was broken up into a thousand pieces of gold and silver; thrones, pulpits, the choir-rail, all disappeared as though swept away by an avalanche of rock and stone, and still those Asiatic hordes continued to pour into the church in blood-stained waves, and on all sides nothing could be seen but a whirlwind of drunken ruffians, some of whom had placed tiaras on their heads, while others wore different parts of the sacerdotal vestments over their own clothing. Chalices and receptacles for the Host were waved aloft, and troops of newly-acquired slaves, bound two and two with ecclesiastical scarfs of gold, and horses and camels laden with plunder, were driven over the pavement strewn with broken fragments of statues, torn copies of the Evangels, and relics of the saints—a barbarous and sacrilegious orgy in which shouts of triumph, fierce threats, bursts of hoarse laughter, children's cries, the neighing of horses, and shrill clanging of trumpets mingled in one overpowering uproar, until, suddenly, the mad tumult ceased, and in the awed hush which followed the august figure of Muhammad II. appeared in a doorway, on horseback and surrounded by a group of princes, viziers, and generals, haughty and impassive, like the living representative of the vengeance of God. Rising in his stirrups, he announced in a voice of thunder, which re-echoed throughout the whole of the devastated building, the first formula of the new religion: "Allah is the light of heaven and earth."

Every Friday the Sultan says his prayers in some one of the mosques of Constantinople.

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Palace of Dolma Baghcheh.

We saw him one day on his way to the mosque of Abdul-Mejid, which stands on the European shore of the Bosphorus not far from the imperial palace of Dolmabâghcheh. To reach this palace from Galata you pass through the populous district of Top-Khâneh, between a great gun-foundry and an immense arsenal, and, traversing the entire Mussulman quarter of Fundukli, which occupies the site of the ancient Aiantion, come out upon a spacious open square on the water's edge, beyond which and on the shore of the Bosphorus rises the famous residence of the sultans.

It is the largest marble building reflected in the waters of the strait from Seraglio hill to the mouth of the Black Sea, and can only be embraced in a single view by taking a kâik and passing along its front. The façade, nearly a half (Italian) mile in length, looks toward Asia, and can be seen at a great distance gleaming between the water's blue and deep green summits of the hills behind it. Properly speaking, it can hardly be called a palace, since it is not the result of any one architectural plan. The various parts are detached and present an extraordinary mixture of styles—Arabic, Greek, Asiatic, Gothic, Turkish, Romanesque, and Renaissance—combining the stateliness of the royal European palaces with the almost effeminate grace and charm of those of Granada and Seville. It might be called, instead of an imperial palace, an imperial city, like that of the emperor of China, and, more from the peculiarity of its arrangements than its great size, looks as though instead of a single monarch, a dozen kings, friends or brothers, might occupy it, dividing their time between amusement and complete idleness. Seen from the Bosphorus, there are a series of façades, looking like a row of theatres and temples, covered with an indescribable mass of ornamentation, apparently, as a Turkish poet has said, thrown broadcast by a madman's hand, and which, like the famous Indian pagoda, weary the eye out almost at the first glance. They seem to be stone memorials of the mad caprices, loves, and intrigues of the dissolute princes who have inhabited them. Rows of Doric and Ionic pillars, light as the pole of a lance; windows framed in festooned cornices and twisted columns; arches carved with flowers and foliage, surmounting doors covered with fretwork; charming little balconies with open-work sculpture; trophies, roses, vines, and garlands which knot and intertwine with one another; delicate fancies in marble budding forth in the entablatures, running along the balconies, surrounding the windows; a network of arabesques extending from door to roof; a bloom and pomp and delicacy of execution and richness of design which lends to each one of the smaller palaces forming a part of the whole the character of some masterpiece of the workman's chisel; and so impossible does it seem that the design could ever have emanated from the brain of a placid Armenian architect that one is rather tempted to ascribe its origin to a dream of some enamored sultan sleeping with his head upon the breast of an ambitious lady-love. Before it stretches a line of lofty marble pilasters connected by a gilded screenwork of boughs and flowers intertwined with such marvellous delicacy that at a little distance it has all the appearance of a lace curtain which at any moment may be carried away by a puff of wind. Long flights of marble stairs lead from the entrances to the water's edge, and disappear beneath the waves. Everything is white, fresh, and sparkling, as though completed but yesterday. No doubt the eye of an artist would detect a thousand minor errors in composition and taste; but the effect as a whole of that vast and magnificent pile of buildings, that array of palaces, white as the driven snow, set like so many jewels and crowned with verdure, reflected in the shining waters below, is one of power, of mystery, of luxurious pomp, and voluptuous pleasure which almost supersedes that of the old Seraglio itself. Those who have had the good fortune to see it affirm that the interior fully comes up to the exterior of the building. Long suites of apartments, whose walls are covered with brilliant and fantastic frescoes, open into one another by doors of cedar and cassia-wood; corridors flooded with soft radiance lead to other rooms lighted from crimson crystal domes, and baths which seem to have been fashioned

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from a single block of Paros marble; lofty balconies overhang mysterious gardens, and groves of cypress and rose trees, from which, through long perspectives of Moorish porticoes, the blue waters of the sea are seen sparkling in the sunlight beyond; and windows, terraces, balconies, kiosks, everything, brilliant with flowers, and everywhere cascades of water shooting into the air to fall back in filmy showers upon green turf and marble pavement; while in all directions there open up enchanting views of the Bosphorus, the cool breezes from whose surface impart a delicious freshness to every corner of the great building.

On the side facing toward Fundukli there is an imposing entrance, covered with a mass of ornamentation, out of which the Sultan was expected to appear and cross the square. Not another monarch upon earth has such beautiful surroundings in which to issue in state from his palace and show himself to his subjects. Standing at the foot of the hill,—on one side is the entrance to the palace, looking like a royal triumphal arch; on the other the beautiful mosque of Abdul-Mejid, flanked by two graceful minarets; opposite is the Bosphorus; and beyond rise the green hills of Asia dotted over with kiosks, palaces, mosques, and villages of every variety of form and color, like some great scattered city decked out for a fête; farther on is seen the smiling beauty of Skutari, with her funereal crown of cypress trees; and between the two banks a never-ending procession of sailing vessels; men-of-war with flags flying; crowded steamboats, looking as though their decks were heaped with flowers; Asiatic ships of strange, obsolete design; launches from the Seraglio; princely barges; flocks of birds skimming over the surface of the water—a scene at once so full of peace and regal beauty that the stranger whose eye wanders over it as he awaits the coming of the imperial cortége finds himself picturing the fortunate possessor of all these things as endowed with angelic beauty and the smiling serenity of an infant.

A half hour before the appointed time two companies of soldiers wearing the uniform of zouaves stationed themselves in the square to keep the way cleared for the Sultan's passage, and before long the spectators began to arrive in crowds. It is always amusing to take note of the queerness and variety of the people who assemble on such occasions. Here and there elegant private carriages were drawn up to one side, filled with Turkish great ladies, the gigantic form of a mounted eunuch standing guard at each door, immovable as pieces of marble; there were hired open turnouts containing English ladies, groups of tourists with opera-glasses hanging at their sides, among whom on this occasion I recognized the languishing face of the irresistible youth from the Hôtel de Byzance, come, no doubt, cruel charmer! to crush with one triumphant glance his powerful but unhappy rival. A few long-haired individuals wandering about the outskirts of the crowd with portfolios under their arms I took to be artists animated by a faint hope of being able to make a hasty sketch of the imperial features. Near the band-stand was a strikingly beautiful French woman, whose conspicuous dress and free, hardened bearing suggested a cosmopolitan adventuress come hither to attract the eye of the Sultan himself, especially as I seemed to read in her glance the "fearful joy of a mighty enterprise." There was also a sprinkling of those old Turks, fanatical and suspicious subjects of the empire, who never fail to be present whenever their Padishah appears in public, in order that they may be assured by the evidence of their own senses that he is alive and well for the glory and prosperity of the universe. It is, in fact, precisely that his people may have this proof of his continued existence that the Sultan thus shows himself every Friday, since it might easily happen again, as it has before, that his death, brought about either by violence or from natural causes, would through some intrigue of the court be concealed from the populace. Then there were beggars, and Mussulman dandies, and eunuchs out of employment, and dervishes, among the last-named of whom I noticed one tall, old, lean specimen who stood motionless gazing with fierce eyes and a most sinister expression at the door of the palace, exactly as though he only awaited the Sultan's appearance to plant himself in his path and fling in his teeth the words addressed by the dervish of the *Orientalists* to Pasha Ali of Tepeleni: "Accursed one! you are no better than a dog." But such examples of inspired candor have gone out of fashion since the famous sabre-thrust of Mahmûd. Then there were numbers of Turkish women standing apart and looking like groups of masks, and the usual gathering like a stage chorus which makes up a Constantinople crowd. All the heads were thrown out in relief against the blue background of the Bosphorus, and every mouth at that moment was probably whispering the same thing. It was just then that rumors were beginning to be circulated about the extravagant doings of Abdul-Aziz. For some little time stories had been told of his insatiable greed for money. People would say to one another, "Mahmûd had a passion for blood; Abdul-Mejid for women; Abdul-Aziz has for gold." All those hopes built upon him when as prince imperial he felled an ox at a single blow, exclaiming, "Thus will I destroy ignorance," had died out some time before. The tastes he had evinced in the early years of his reign for a simple and severe mode of life, caring, as was said, for only one woman, and cutting down with an unsparing hand the enormous expenses of the Seraglio, were now but a distant memory. Probably it had been many years as well since he had finally abandoned those studies in legislation and military tactics and European literature about which he had made as much noise as though the entire regeneration of the empire was to be effected through them; now he thought only of himself, and hardly a day passed that some new anecdote was not set in circulation about his bursts of wrath against the minister of finance, who either would not or could not give him as much money as he demanded. At the least opposition he would hurl the first object on which he could lay his hands at his unfortunate Excellency, repeating from beginning to end and at the top of his voice the ancient formula of the imperial oath: "By God, the Creator of heaven and earth, by the prophet Mohammed, by the seven variations of the Koran, by the hundred and twenty-four thousand prophets of God, by the soul of my grandfather and by the soul of my father, by my sons and by my sword! give me money or I will have your head stuck on the point of the highest minaret in Stambul." And by one means or another he always succeeded in getting what he wanted, sometimes gloating over the money thus acquired like a common miser over his hoard, at others scattering it to the winds in the indulgence of all manner of puerile fancies. To-day he would take a sudden interest in lions, to-morrow in tigers, and agents would be despatched forthwith to India and Africa to purchase them for him; then for a whole month five hundred parrots stationed in the imperial gardens made them resound with one single word; then he was seized with a mania for collecting carriages, and for pianos, which he insisted upon having played supported upon the backs of four slaves; then he took to cock-fighting—would witness the combats with enthusiastic interest, and himself fasten a medal around the neck of the victor, driving the vanquished into exile beyond the Bosphorus; then he had a passion for play, then for kiosks, then for pictures: it was as though the court had gone back to the days of the first Ibrahim.

But with it all the unfortunate prince was unable to find peace; he was moody and taciturn, and only

succeeded in alternating between utter weariness of soul and the most wretched state of apprehension. As though with an uneasy foreboding of the tragic fate awaiting him, he would sometimes be possessed with the idea that he was going to be poisoned, and for a while, mistrusting every one about him, would refuse to eat anything but hard-boiled eggs. Then, again, he would be haunted by such a dread of fire that he would have everything in his apartments, made of wood, removed, to the very frames of the mirrors; it was even said that at these times he would read at night by the light of a candle placed in a basin of water. And yet, notwithstanding all these follies, which were supposed to have their origin in a cause of which there is no necessity to speak here, he preserved to the full the original strength of his indomitable will, and knew how to make himself both obeyed and feared by the most independent spirits around him. The only person who exerted any influence over him at all was his mother, a vain, foolish woman, who in the early years of his reign used to have the streets through which he must pass on his way to the mosque spread with brocaded carpets, which she would give away the following day to the slaves who were sent to take them up. 290

In the midst of all the turmoil of his restless life Abdul-Aziz found time as well for the most trivial whims, such as the having a door painted after a particular design, combinations of certain fruits and flowers, and, after giving the most minute directions, would spend hours watching every stroke of the artist's brush, as though that were the main business of life. 291

All these eccentricities, exaggerated—who knows to what extent?—by the thousand tongues of the Seraglio, were in every one's mouth; and possibly from that time on the threads of the conspiracy which two years later was to hurl him from the throne were woven more and more closely about the unhappy prince. According to the Mussulmans, his fall had already been determined upon and judgment passed upon him and upon his reign—a judgment which does not differ in any essential point from that applicable to any other one of the later sultans. Imperial princes, attracted toward a European civilization by a liberal but superficial education, their youthful imaginations all on fire with dreams of reform and glory, before mounting the throne they indulge in visions of the great changes they are to bring about, and form resolutions, no doubt perfectly sincere at the time, to dedicate their entire lives to that end, leading an existence of struggle and self-denial. Then they come to the throne, and after some years of ineffectual resistance, confronted by thousands of obstacles, hemmed in by customs and traditions, balked and opposed by men and things, appalled at the immensity of the undertaking, of which they had formed no true idea, they become discouraged, lapse into indolence, grow suspicious, and finally turn to pleasure-seeking and self-indulgence for that distraction which seems to be denied them in the successful carrying out of their designs, and, leading an utterly sensual life, lose little by little even the memory of their early ambitions, as well as the consciousness of their own deterioration. Thus it happens that every new reign is ushered in with the most hopeful prognostications, and not without reason; only these are as invariably succeeded by disappointment. 292

Abdul-Aziz did not keep us waiting: at the hour fixed there was a flourish of trumpets, the band struck up a warlike march, the soldiers presented arms, a company of lancers made their appearance suddenly in the gateway, and after them the Sultan on horseback, advancing slowly and followed by the members of his court. He passed so close in front of me that I had an excellent opportunity of examining his features attentively, and of finding how singularly incorrect was the picture I had formed of him in my mind. The "king of kings," the prodigal, violent, capricious, imperious Sultan, then about forty-four years old, had the air of an extremely good-natured Turk who had found himself a sultan without quite knowing why. He was stout and robust, with good features, large calm eyes, and a short, close-cut beard, already somewhat grizzled: his countenance was open and placid, his bearing easy, almost careless, and in his calm, indifferent expression no trace of consciousness of the thousand eyes fixed upon him could be discovered. He rode a handsome gray horse with gold-mounted trappings, led by the bridle by two gorgeous grooms. The long distance at which the retinue followed would have pointed him out as the Sultan if nothing else had. He was very plainly dressed, wearing a simple fez, long dark coat buttoned close up under the chin, light trousers, and leather shoes. Advancing very slowly, he looked around on the spectators with an expression of mingled benevolence and weariness, as though saying, "Ah, if you did but know how sick of it all I am!" The Mussulmans all bowed profoundly, and many Europeans raised their hats, but he took no notice of any one's salutation. Passing in front of us, he gave a glance at a tall officer who saluted with his sword, another at the Bosphorus, and then a much longer look at two young English ladies who were watching him from a carriage, and who turned as red as cherries. I noticed that his hand was white and well formed: it was, by the way, the right hand, the same with which two years after he opened the vein in the bath. After him followed a crowd of pashas, courtiers, and prominent officials on horseback, for the most part sturdy, black-bearded men, simply dressed, and as silent, grave, and taciturn as though they were part of a funeral cortège: then came a group of grooms leading splendid-looking horses; then more officers, these on foot, their breasts covered with gold braid: when these last had passed the soldiers lowered their muskets, the crowd began to scatter over the square, and I found myself standing gazing at the summit of Mt. Bulgûrlû, revolving in my mind the extraordinary situation in which a sultan of Stambul must find himself now-a-days. 293

He is, said I, a Mohammedan monarch, and his royal palace stands in the shadow of a Christian city, Pera, which towers above his head. He is an absolute sovereign, holding sway over one of the largest empires in the world, and yet here in his capital and not far away there live in those great palaces which overlook his Seraglio four or five ceremonious foreigners who lord it over him in his own house, and who in their intercourse with him conceal under the most respectful language a constant menace, which he acknowledges and fears. He has power over the life and property of millions of his subjects, and the means of gratifying every whim, no matter how extravagant, and yet could not, if he wanted to, alter the fashion of his own headgear. Surrounded by an army of courtiers and body-guards, who, if required, would kneel down and kiss his footprints, he stands in constant fear of his life and that of his sons. Absolute master of a thousand among the most beautiful women on earth, he alone among all Mussulmans in his dominions cannot bestow his hand in marriage upon a free woman, can only have sons of slaves, and is himself termed "the son of a slave" by the same people who call him "the shadow of God." The sound of his name is feared and revered from the farthest confines of Tartary to the uttermost bounds of Maghreb, and in his own capital there is an ever-increasing number of persons over whom he can claim no shadow of control, and who laugh at him, his power, and his religion. Over the entire surface of his immense domain, among the most wretched tribes of the most distant provinces, in the most isolated 294

mosques and monasteries of the wildest regions, fervent prayers are constantly ascending for his safety, health, and honor, and yet he cannot make a journey anywhere in his empire that he does not find himself surrounded by enemies who execrate his name and call down the vengeance of God upon his head. In the eyes of that part of the world which lies outside his palace-gates he is one of the most august and imposing monarchs upon earth; to those who wait at his elbow he seems the weakest, most pusillanimous, and wretched being that ever wore a crown. A resistless current of ideas, beliefs, and forces, all directly opposed to the traditions and spirit upon which his power rests, sweeps over him, transforming before his very eyes, underneath his feet, all about him, customs, habits, laws, the very men and objects themselves, without his assistance or consent. And there he is between Europe and Asia, in his huge palace washed by the sea-waves as though it were a ship ready to set sail, in the midst of an inextricable confusion of ideas and things, surrounded by fabulous luxury and misery unspeakable, *neither two nor one*—no longer a real Mussulman, nor yet a complete European; reigning over a people changed, though only in part, barbarians at heart, with a whitewash of civilization; two-faced like Janus; worshipped like a god, watched like a slave; adored, deceived, beguiled, while every day that passes over his head extinguishes a ray of the halo that surrounds him and removes another stone from the pedestal upon which he stands. It seems to me, were I in his place, weary of such a condition of things, satiated with pleasure, disgusted with adulation, and outdone with the constant surveillance and suspicion to which I was subjected, I would lose all patience with a sovereignty so onerous and unstable, a rule over conditions so hopelessly at war with themselves, and some time at night, when the entire Seraglio was buried in slumber, would jump in the Bosphorus like a fugitive galley-slave, and, swimming off to Galata, pass the hours till dawn in some mariners' tavern, with a glass of beer and a clay pipe, shouting the Marseillaise in chorus.

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Palace of the Sultan on the Bosphorus.

A half hour later the Sultan returned, driven rapidly by, this time in a closed carriage, followed by a number of officers on foot; and the show was over. I think, on the whole, that what impressed me most vividly was the sight of those officers, attired in full dress, running and skipping after the imperial equipage like so many lackeys: I have never witnessed a similar prostitution of the military uniform.

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This spectacle of the state appearance of the Sultan is, as may be seen, a poor affair enough, very different from what it once was. Formerly the sultans only showed themselves in public surrounded by great pomp and display, preceded and followed by a gorgeous retinue of horsemen, slaves, guards of the gardens, chamberlains, and eunuchs, which when seen from a distance resembled, to use the simile of the enthusiastic chroniclers of the day, "a vast bed of tulips." In these days the sultans seem to rather avoid all such display, as though it would be a piece of theatrical ostentation, representing an order of things which no longer exists. I often asked myself what one of those early monarchs would say if, rising for a moment from his sepulchre in Brusa or türbeh in Stambul, he should behold one of his descendants of the nineteenth century pass by clad in a long black coat, without turban, sword, or jewels, and making his way through a crowd of insolent foreigners: probably he would grow red in the face with rage and shame, and, to show his utter disdain, would treat him as Suleiman I. did Hassan—seize him by his beard and cut it off with his cimeter, than which no more poignant insult can be offered to an Osman. And, indeed, between the sultans of to-day and those whose names resounded like claps of thunder throughout Europe from the twelfth to the sixteenth century there is as much difference as between the Ottoman empire of our times and that of the early centuries. To their lot fell the youth, beauty, and vigor of the race; and they were not only the living representatives of their people, glorious examples, precious pearls in the sword of Islamism, but they constituted a distinct force in themselves. The personal qualities of these powerful rulers formed one of the most potent factors in the marvellous growth of the Ottoman power during that period of its youth which covered the hundred and twenty-three years from Osman to Muhammad II. Truly, that was a succession of mighty princes, and, with a single exception, not only powerful, but, if you take into consideration the times in which they lived and conditions of their race, austere and wise as well, and deeply beloved by their people—frequently ferocious, but rarely unjust, and often kind and generous to their enemies. All of these, too, as princes of such a race should be, were handsome and imposing in appearance, veritable lions, as their

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mothers termed them, at whose roar the whole earth trembled. The Abdul-Mejids, Abdul-Azizs, and Murads are but pale shadows of padishahs in comparison with those formidable youths, sons of fathers and mothers of eighteen and fifteen respectively, offspring of the flower of Tartar blood and bloom of Greek, Caucasian, and Persian beauty. At fourteen they commanded armies, governed provinces, and were presented by their mothers with slaves as beautiful and ardent as themselves. Sons were born to them at sixteen as well as at seventy, and they retained their youthful vigor of mind and body to old age. Their spirit, said the poets, was of iron, their bodies were of steel. Certain features which they all possessed in common were lost later on by their degenerate descendants—high foreheads, with arched eyebrows meeting like those of the Persians; the blue eyes of the sons of the Steppes; a curved nose above crimson lips, “like the beak of a parrot over a cherry;” and very thick black beards, which exhausted the fertility of the Seraglio poets to find meet comparisons for. They had the piercing glance of the eagle of Mt. Taurus and the endurance of the king of the desert; bull necks, enormously wide shoulders, expanding chests, “capable of containing all the warlike ardor of their people;” very long arms, huge muscles, short bowed legs, under whose grip the most powerful Turkomanian chargers would neigh with pain; and great shaggy hands, which tossed the bronze maces and mighty bows of the soldiery about as though they had been reeds. And their surnames fitted them well—wrestler, champion, thunderbolt, bone-grinder, blood-shedder. After Allah, war occupied the chief place in their thoughts, and death the least. Although they did not possess the genius of great commanders, they were endowed with that power of prompt and quick action which almost takes its place, and a ferocious obstinacy which not infrequently accomplishes the same results. They swept like winged furies across the field of battle, the heron-quills fastened in their white turbans and the ample folds of their purple and gold-embroidered caftans showing from afar, as with savage cries they drove forward the decimated ranks of sciari whose ox-like nerves had at last given way under the demoralizing fire of Servian and German guns. They swam their horses across rivers whose waters were reddened with blood from their dripping cimeters; they would seize cowardly or panicstricken pashas by their throats, dragging them from the saddle in their headlong flight; leap from their horses in a time of rout and plunge their jewelled daggers up to the hilt in the backs of the flying soldiers; and, mortally wounded, would conceal the hurt and mount upon some eminence on the battlefield that their janissaries might behold the countenance of their lord, pallid with death, but threatening and imperious to the last, until, finally sinking exhausted to the earth, they would roar with rage, maybe, but never with pain. What must the sensations have been of one of those gentle Persian or Circassian slaves, hardly more than a child, when on the evening of a day of battle she beheld for the first time, in the door of her purple tent, under the subdued lamplight, the terrific apparition of one of those all-powerful sultans, drunk with victory and blood. But he could be tender and winning as well, and, gently taking the trembling little fingers in his mighty hands, still cramped from wielding the cimenter, search his imagination for pretty figures of speech to reassure his frightened slave, comparing her beauty to the flowers in his gardens, the jewels in his dagger, the most gorgeous birds in the forests, the most exquisite tints of a sunrise in Anatolia or Mesopotamia, until at last, taking courage, she would reply in the same impassioned and fanciful language: “Crown of my head! glory of my life! my beloved and mighty lord! may thy countenance ever shine with splendor on the two worlds of Africa and Europe! may victory follow wherever thy horse shall bear thee! may thy shadow extend over the whole earth! Would I were a rose to exhale sweetness in the folds of thy turban! a butterfly beating its wings against thy forehead!” And then, as her all-powerful lover reposed his mighty head upon her breast, she would recount childish tales of emerald palaces and mountains of gold, while all around the wild and savage soldiers of the army lay extended fast asleep upon the dark, bloodstained earth. All weakness, however, was left within the tent, from which these sultans came forth more hardy and imperious than ever. They were tender in the harem, ferocious on the battlefield, humble in the mosque, and haughty on the throne. Their language was full of glowing hyperboles and appalling threats; any judgment once pronounced by them was irrevocable; the war was declared, the subject elevated to the pinnacle of greatness, the head of the victim rolled at the foot of the throne, or a tempest of fire and sword drove furiously across the face of a rebel province. Thus sweeping from Persia to the Danube, from Asia to Macedonia, in a continual succession of wars and triumphs, with intervals devoted to the pursuit of love and in hunting, to the flower of their youth there succeeded a maturity even more vigorous and ardent, followed by an old age of which their horses’ flanks, their sword-blades, or the hearts of their favorites could not have been conscious. And not in old age alone, but sometimes in the very flower and vigor of their youth, they would become overpowered with a sense of their position, dismayed in the very moment of victory and triumph by the tremendous responsibility resting upon them, and, seized with a sort of terror at the magnitude and loneliness of their own exalted state, would turn to God with all the force of their natures, passing days and nights in composing religious poetry in dim recesses of the palace-gardens, betaking themselves to the seashore to meditate by the hour upon the Koran, joining the frantic dances of the dervishes, or reducing themselves with fasting and sackcloth in the company of some devout old hermit. In death as in life they furnished their people with examples either of fortitude or of majesty—whether dying with the serenity of a saint, like the founder of the dynasty; or laden with years and glory and melancholy, like Orkhan; or by the hand of a traitor, like Murad I.; or in the misery of exile, like Bayezid; or calmly conversing with a circle of poets and scholars, like the first Muhammad; or from the mortification of defeat, like the second Murad. And one may safely assert that there is nothing upon the blood-red horizon of Ottoman history which can compare with the threatening phantoms of these formidable rulers.

Transcriber's Notes

Punctuation, hyphenation, and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed. Several spurious commas were removed.

Simple typographical errors were corrected; occasional unbalanced quotation marks retained.

Ambiguous hyphens at the ends of lines were retained.

Page [241](#): “wings of the loves” probably should be “doves”.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CONSTANTINOPLE, V. 1 (OF 2) ***

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